From the President & CEO

A Foundation of Strong Relationships

What a whirlwind of a year it has been for us at CIS of Houston! First off, let me start by thanking everyone who played a part in helping us support our students and families this school year with basic needs assistance, academic support, mental health services, and college and career readiness support. We experienced an unprecedented start to the school year due to the impact of the record-breaking flooding from Hurricane Harvey. With support from our community, we were able to act as first responders on school campuses to provide assistance for students, families, and staff who were significantly impacted.

While the 2017-2018 school year was a year of recovery, it was also a year of expanded reach for CIS of Houston. We are so grateful for our community of supporters who have answered the great need of Houston’s students and allowed CIS to expand services reaching struggling students during this challenging year. In response to Harvey alone, our community entrusted us with more than $1.8 million to support thousands of students, families, and school district staff who found themselves in dire need of immediate support. We were able to help a record number of campuses and communities thanks to our funders. During the school year, CIS Student Support Specialists served over 117,000 students on 140 campuses. We are proud to share that 99% of our students stayed in school and 96% of CIS students were promoted to the next grade.

What makes CIS’ impact transformational is the emphasis we place on establishing meaningful relationships with students. What CIS does best is demonstrated in the real-life stories of our courageous students overcoming adversity with the help of a caring adult, and we will share these “Stories of Us” in the pages to come. Our CIS staff are developing significant relationships with students everyday in the schools and doing whatever it takes to help students succeed. It is because of our CIS staff on the front-lines, along with our powerful network of partners, that CIS is able to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of students and families across Greater Houston.

We thank you again for all that you do for Communities In Schools of Houston as we look forward to entering our 40th year of serving students. There is no doubt that as CIS evolves, we will continue to grow this vital work with your continued support.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Clay Briggs, LMSW-IPR
Chief Executive Officer

David Sambrooks
President of the CIS Board
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Surrounding students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.
Our Schools
CIS PROGRAM SITES 2017-2018

ALDINE ISD
Benjamin Davis High School
Nimitz High School

ALIEF ISD
Albright Middle School
Alexander Elementary School
Alief Learning Center
Alief Middle School
Alief Newcomer Support Program
Best Elementary School
Boone Elementary School
Budewig Intermediate School
Bush Elementary School
Chambers Elementary School
Chancellor Elementary School
Collins Elementary School
Crossroads
Cummings Elementary School
Elsik High School
Elsik Ninth Grade Center
Hastings High School
Hastings Ninth Grade Center
 Hearne Elementary School
Heflin Elementary School
Hicks Elementary School
Holmquist Elementary School
Holub Middle School
Horn Elementary School
Kennedy Elementary School
Killough Middle School
Klentzman Intermediate School
Landis Elementary School
Liestman Elementary School
Mahanay Elementary School
Martin Elementary School
Mata Intermediate School
Miller Intermediate School
O’Donnell Middle School
Olle Middle School
Outley Elementary School
Owens Intermediate School
Smith Elementary School
Sneed Elementary School
Taylor High School
Youens Elementary School
Youngblood Intermediate School

COMMUNITY COLLEGES
HCC-Spring Branch
Lone Star College – Cy-Fair
Lone Star College – Greenspoint
Lone Star College – North Harris
Lone Star College – Tomball
Lone Star College – University Park
Lone Star College – Victory Center

HOUSTON ISD
Atherton Elementary School
Attucks Middle School
Austin High School
Bastian Elementary School
Benavidez Elementary School
Bonham Elementary School
Bruce Elementary School
Burnet Elementary School
Chavez High School
Edison Middle School
Gallegos Elementary School
Hamilton Middle School
Heights High School
Holland Middle School
Kennedy Elementary School
Lamar High School
Lantrip Elementary School
Looscan Elementary School
McNamara Elementary School
Milby High School
Navarro Middle School
Neff Early Learning Center
Neff Elementary School
North Houston Early College HS
Northside High School
Port Houston Elementary School
Sam Houston Math, Science, and Technology Center
Scarborough High School
Secondary DAEP School
Sharpstown High School
Shearn Elementary School
Sherman Elementary School
Sterling High School
Sutton Elementary School
Walnut Bend Elementary School
Wheatley High School
Whittier Elementary School
Wisdom High School
Woodson School
Worthing High School

SPRING BRANCH ISD
Academy of Choice
The Bear Boulevard School
Buffalo Creek Elementary School
Cedar Brook Elementary School
District Alternative Education Program
Edgewood Elementary School
Frostwood Elementary School
Hollibrook Elementary School
Housman Elementary School
Landrum Middle School
The Lion Lane School
Meadow Wood Elementary School
Memorial High School
Memorial Middle School
Northbrook High School
Northbrook Middle School
Nottingham Elementary School
The Panda Path School
Pine Shadows Elementary School
Ridgecrest Elementary School
Rummel Creek Elementary School
Shadow Oaks Elementary School
Sherwood Elementary School
Spring Branch Elementary School
Spring Branch Middle School
Spring Branch Newcomer Support
Spring Forest Middle School
Spring Oaks Middle School
Spring Shadows Elementary School
Spring Woods High School
Spring Woods Middle School
Stratford High School
Terrace Elementary School
Thornwood Elementary School
The Tiger Trail School
Treasure Forest Elementary School
Westchester Academy
Westwood Elementary School
The Wildcat Way School
Woodview Elementary School

FORT BEND ISD
Christa McAuliffe Middle School

STATE CHARTER SCHOOLS
KIPP 3D Academy
Sanchez High School
Our Work
CIS Integrated Student Supports Model

SUPPORTIVE GUIDANCE
& COUNSELING
Providing students with individual supportive guidance and counseling and facilitating support groups to help them manage their emotions and interactions with peers; addressing issues such as grief and loss, depression, low self-esteem, anger management, anxiety, and suspected drug/alcohol use.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT
Providing tutoring sessions for students requiring personalized attention in test-taking, study skills, or specific subject areas.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Linking students via referrals to local service agencies to meet basic needs involving food, clothing, housing, transportation, employment, rent and utility assistance, as well as referrals for crisis intervention, medical, dental, and mental health issues.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS
Building students’ skills to prepare them for post-secondary education and careers beyond high school by providing workshops on essay-writing, college applications, resume-building, job applications, successful interviewing and hosting college tours & career days.

PARENT & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT
Providing parent workshops to engage parents and coordinate volunteer opportunities for parents at the school to involve the family in their child’s education.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES
Organizing field trips for students to visit local museums, cultural events, and college campuses, as well as planning large group events such as guest speaker presentations and health fairs.
We believe in the power of relationships through everything we do.

In our 39-year history, CIS’ priority has always been to establish meaningful relationships in the Houston community and in every one of the schools where we work.

Here at CIS, we are a family, and our students and their families say this over and over about us – whether you’re a young CIS student in Pre-K, a senior in high school, a staff member, volunteer, or parent. We believe that achieving our individual and collective dreams requires us to rely on and help each other along the way.

The following stories provide a glimpse into some of the connections that make up our family and capture the transformative power of the relationships we create and nurture that makes us who we are: Communities In Schools.
Kevin & Alejandro

CIS Student Support Specialists, who work in schools full-time, help students see and meet their potential in ways big and small.

At the beginning of high school Kevin was unable to prioritize his attendance and education, working late into the night as a janitor and waking up many mornings to epileptic convulsions. Numerous undocumented doctor’s notes combined with his teachers’ unawareness of his epilepsy created a school environment in which Kevin felt out of place and like a failure due to his absence. Despite the threat of truancy, Kevin continued to fall behind in school. However, Kevin’s trajectory changed when he was introduced to Communities In Schools’ Student Support Specialist Alejandro.

Alejandro brought Kevin to a group called XY Zone: a 3-tiered program for young men of color that focuses on emotional growth and leadership skills. Once a shy boy with very low self-esteem, Kevin became an integral part of the group. He began talking with conviction to his peers and showcased his growth by leading their service learning project. With his extensive hours working as a night janitor elsewhere, Kevin witnessed the lack of appreciation the members of the custodial team at the school received. Thus, for their service learning project he proposed a custodial and cafeteria employee appreciation month to the group. Kevin took on a dynamic role, filling the month by highlighting fun facts about the staff members along with hosting a dinner for them.

Kevin used the power of his relationship with Alejandro to build other relationships. Alejandro became a voice for Kevin at school. He went directly to Kevin’s teachers and helped them to understand why Kevin was consistently absent, ensuring that Kevin was always equipped with a doctor’s note when returning to school following an epileptic episode. Once the teachers were informed, they allowed Kevin to take most of his classes online and checked in on him often to give support. This increased Kevin’s flexibility as well as alleviated a lot of the pressure that he felt, putting him on the track to graduation.

With Communities In Schools and Alejandro’s support, Kevin no longer felt behind or out of place at school. He began to take initiative, staying after school and building better relationships with his teachers. Now a high school graduate, Kevin earned scholarship to attend community college and has set his sights on opening a restaurant with his twin brother, who is in school to become a chef.

Kevin’s story — like so many of the students CIS serves — is a testament to our commitment to students. We’re ALL IN to help them achieve the future they deserve.”
CHARTING NEW PATHS

We are deeply committed to working together to chart new pathways that deepen and grow our students to have the support and opportunity they need to succeed in school and life.
After losing both parents, surviving Hurricane Harvey and experiencing homelessness, Alexander refused to give up on his quest for college. He turned to his Communities In Schools’ Student Support Specialist for help.

Graduation day was an uphill climb for Alexander, a senior at HISD’s Austin High School. He mostly lived out of his backpack as he went back and forth from school to work, putting in long hours to pay his own bills and provide for himself. But despite the extreme setbacks he faced, Alexander beat the odds as the first in his family to graduate from high school and go off to college.

He graduated the Spring of 2018, thanks in part to Communities In Schools of Houston’s Emma Meneses, who he says is “like a mom” to him and has done whatever it takes to see him succeed.

Alexander first connected with Emma, CIS of Houston Student Support Specialist at Austin High School during his junior year. He remembers seeing students playing games at lunch in her office and thought it looked like an inviting place. The first things he asked her for were a toothbrush and deodorant. Once she was able to get those for him, he was convinced that Emma could be trusted.

Emma’s support for Alexander evolved from toiletries to her helping him secure food, healthcare, clothes and school supplies, especially after Hurricane Harvey flooded his home. She stepped in where grief, stress and instability could have overwhelmed Alexander. She allowed him to process everything that had happened to him, dream for the future, and carve a positive path forward. She provided emotional support and a listening ear to help him cope with issues he had been trying to resolve on his own and helped him apply for college and financial aid.

Alexander is now attending Albion College in Michigan on a full scholarship and is double majoring in criminal justice and social work. His dream is to help and inspire others to follow their dreams just as he is doing. He wants to help kids like him, and he wants to stay involved with Communities In Schools.

“There’s a reason to still have faith in people when there are organizations like CIS that help kids like me who come from nothing – from less than nothing – be able to succeed and inspire others to do the same,” he said.

“I will be grateful for the rest of my life to CIS for providing that sanctuary for me.”
The Storm After The Storm

Six months after Hurricane Harvey impacted 150 Sterling High School students and their families, many of them were still living in hotels. The Communities In Schools of Houston Student Support Specialist on campus, Alma Gutierrez, LMSW, has been on the front lines, helping these families in their continued recovery.

Sterling families who still couldn’t return to their homes were not anticipating such a long recuperation process. But since the storm first hit, Gutierrez has been helping students and their families get through the crisis.

Gutierrez met regularly with students impacted by the storm, many with fear, anxiety, insecurity and uncertainty. “They don’t know what to expect. They don’t know what might happen tomorrow,” she said. “So they come to me, and they just vent. They talk about what life in a hotel is like and what’s happening with their families.”

And talking helps. In his first year of high school as Harvey struck and destroyed everything his family owned, one freshman reached out to Gutierrez at a time when he felt most vulnerable. He now meets regularly with Gutierrez and talks through his fears and frustrations. Gutierrez worked with his family to establish a routine creating a sense of predictable stability in the midst of transition and upheaval. The student and his family still live in a hotel, but he now has structure and feels like he has a place to belong. He feels safe.

Gutierrez encourages students like this freshman to keep working on their studies and their future in spite of whatever storms life or nature may throw at them. She urges them to apply for internships, like the CIS Nursing Internship Program in partnership with Houston Methodist and CHI St. Luke’s Health Hospital, the CIS Legal Internship in partnership with the Houston Bar Association, or the CIS Apartment Management and Maintenance Internship in partnership with Judwin Properties. Gutierrez pushes students to work for their futures while supporting their needs in the present.
After Hurricane Harvey devastated homes around McNamara Elementary School, families lost their clothes, their beds, everything they worked for over a lifetime. As they worked to recover from lost wages and replace basic living necessities while trying to help their little ones cope with the traumatic experience, overwhelmed parents turned to the school.

With a long-standing network of robust services and resources from hundreds of organizations and volunteers ready to support students like those at McNamara at a moment’s notice, Communities In Schools of Houston was ready to help.

Maricela Varela, CIS Student Support Specialist at McNamara Elementary, jumped into action. She talked to families day after day learning about their experiences and their greatest needs. From sleeping on floors to forgoing holiday celebrations, families confided in Varela about the sacrifices they were having to make. Varela worked with CIS community partners who helped McNamara families find new places to live, beds and other furniture, school uniforms and other basic necessities, and even Christmas gifts for children.

While many of her students were coping with fear and anxiety related to Harvey, Varela worked closely with teachers and administrators to catch the early warning signs and provide students the help they needed as quickly as possible. Varela connected students who needed additional emotional support to CIS mental health partners.

From post-Harvey support to a partnership bringing volunteers into schools to help teachers and students, Varela cultivates relationships with CIS partners and serves as their liaison to the McNamara community. These partnerships give her students and their families access to the best resources possible. Parents trust Varela and all staff at McNamara to care for their children and provide the support and opportunities for them to flourish.
OUR COMMITMENT

Because we’re in schools every day, we see the unique needs of each student and partner with teachers and the community to help students overcome barriers that can stand in the way of their success.
Effectiveness

The success and impact of the Communities In Schools of Houston’s proven model of Integrated Student Supports can be seen in the results.

**Pre K-12th Grade**

- 99% of CIS students stayed in school
- 98% of CIS students improved in academics/behavior and/or attendance
- 96% of CIS students in K-11 were promoted to the next grade level
- 92% of CIS eligible seniors graduated

*Results based on case-managed students*

**College**

- 55% Re-enrollment, transfer, and graduation rate
- 2.7 Average GPA
- 1,923 Number of credits earned
Since 1979, Communities In Schools has been keeping students in school and on track to achieve in life. We continued that tradition last year, supporting 117,814 students in 140 schools across 5 school districts and community colleges. From clean clothes and food to academic and emotional support, we do whatever it takes to help our students succeed.
Impact

400 Community Partners

140 Campuses on which CIS served Houston area students

859 Home visits conducted to promote family engagement

4,473 Crisis situations handled

198,846 Referrals were made to community agencies

117,814 Students served through campus-wide events

33,542 Students served through targeted intervention services

5,846 Students served through intensive case-management services
BUILDING FUTURES

At CIS, we amplify the power of each student’s potential by connecting them with caring adults and community resources designed to help them succeed. Across the Houston community, we knit together a powerful network of partners that help students stay focused so they can go further tomorrow.
Financials

Communities In Schools of Houston (CIS) demonstrates a true public/private partnership. 55% of CIS total revenue comes from public funds, specifically support from school districts, state of Texas and Harris County. 45% of CIS total revenue comes from the generosity of foundations, corporations, and individual donors.

CIS has a strong fiscal responsibility, with more than 87 cents of every dollar going directly to program services.

2017-2018 Operating Revenue: $15,988,713

Revenue

Public: $8,144,008 (51%)
Funds from school districts, state of Texas, Harris County, and the City of Houston

Private: $7,844,705 (49%)
Funds from foundations, corporations and individual donors

Expenses: $14,711,835
Net Gain/(Loss) = $1,276,878
CIS collaborates with over 400 social service agencies, local businesses, and health care providers in the community to generate meaningful interventions for students who are most at-risk of dropping out of school. Whether a child needs mental health counseling, tutoring, a trip to the dentist, school supplies or a safe place to live, CIS is there to help.
Major Donors 2017-2018

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United Way of Greater Houston

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Association of Legal Administrators*
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Bunker Hill Elementary PTSA*
Center for Advocacy and Philanthropy
Christ Community Church*
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Communities In Schools
Houston

Communities In Schools of Houston
1235 North Loop West, Suite 300
Houston, Texas 77008
713.654.1515
www.cishouston.org