



CIS Day at the Capitol

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Teacher Appreciation Week
.....May 1-7

National Teacher Day
..... May 3

College Access Day Event Dalton State University
..... May 5

AmeriCorps Week
.....May 14-21

AmeriCorps Training and Recognition Day
.....June 30 - July 1

Performance LearningCenter® Summer Training
.....July 19-21

Site Coordinator Training
..... July 26-28

Dine Out For Kids®
..... August 18



David Ralston, Speaker of the House

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Georgia works diligently to keep abreast of education legislation in order to inform our network regarding relevant bills. During the legislative session, CIS provides the Georgia General Assembly with information to help them better understand how CIS is helping to reduce the number of dropouts in Georgia. CIS Day at the Capitol showcases local affiliates and further demonstrates how CIS partners with the Department of Education and school districts to increase graduation rates and prepare students to compete in the global workforce. Local affiliates, board members and staff hear from members of the General Assembly regarding the legislative process.

Each year during CIS Day at the Capitol, participants look forward to being engaged in the civic process and learning how their voices and actions can make a difference as elected officials move bills through the legislative process before becoming law. Ewan Petersen, a Cobb County Performance Learning Center® student, provided attendees with remarks regarding his experience at the CIS Performance Learning Center program and how it is helping him improve academically, develop leadership skills and plan for college.



During the event, local affiliates connect with their elected officials to strengthen relationships and awareness of CIS' impact. Several display information regarding how their programs are helping kids graduate from high school and prepare for post-secondary education and careers.



CIS Day at the Capitol closed with Governor Deal meeting students and volunteers and joining all for a group picture. Participants then entered the Senate and House of Representative chambers to hear the General Assembly in session and learn about the bills being discussed.



Guest Columnist



Karen Brewer-Edwards
*Regional General Manager
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.*

Many of the 26,000 associates that I manage in 87 stores in North Georgia, including Atlanta, have kids in Georgia public schools, and that's why we at Walmart understand the importance of partnering with organizations that have a focus on education. Each Walmart is considered a "community store" that gives locally and strives to build connections between our associates and community organizations. Every year Walmart donates thousands of dollars and in-kind contributions to local community organizations and schools. We want to do our part to ensure youth are empowered to succeed in school and prepared for successful careers. These youth will be our future managers, associates and customers.

I understand the value of programs like Communities In Schools. When you increase expectations and help kids understand that they can succeed and begin a process to help them develop the necessary skills to do so, they begin to assume responsibility for self-improvement and discipline. The partnership with Communities In Schools allows us to support students through the Student Achievement Month (SAM) and their Performance Learning Centers. Attending the SAM luncheon, reading the entries in the booklet and hearing one of the winner's speeches helped me understand that kids faced with difficult situations can excel, when provided with the right resources, determination and caring adults.

Walmart understands that investing in education makes good economic sense. We know that education reform can help strengthen Georgia's economy. All businesses are looking for a well educated workforce to help them compete in the global economy. And improving educational outcomes will certainly have tremendous economic benefits in our state, including boosting retail sales and tax revenue.

As a new member of the Communities In Schools of Georgia's board, I look forward to taking on challenges to help increase graduation rates and improve academic achievement for the kids of Georgia. We all benefit when we have fewer dropouts and more graduates.

DID YOU KNOW ? ? ? ?

- Communities In Schools (CIS) completed a five-year comprehensive evaluation with ICF International that ranked CIS as the most effective dropout prevention organization in America. It was the largest and most comprehensive evaluation of dropout prevention programs ever conducted. The evaluation compared results to over 1,600 studies screened by the Department of Education's *What Works Clearinghouse*.
- Two Communities In Schools local affiliates, CIS of Laurens and Glynn County, have achieved national accreditation by demonstrating compliance with all Communities In Schools Total Quality System (TQS) standards. There are three more affiliates currently in the review process, CIS of Catoosa, Cobb and Fitzgerald/Ben Hill Counties. The TQS standards define expectations for effective nonprofit business practices and for implementing the Communities In Schools model of integrated student support services at school sites. The site standards are based on the ICF evaluation that documented the impact of the Communities In Schools model.
- Communities In Schools of Georgia is launching a new billboard campaign.
- Walmart's annual giving numbers were \$799 million of cash and in-kind charitable contributions across the globe. CIS of Georgia and CIS local affiliates are beneficiaries. Walmart's generous support helps fund Performance Learning Centers® and provides scholarships to students who attend these small, non-traditional high schools.

SAM STATE WINNERS



*Front (l-r) Rainey Kirkland and Anna Streat
Back (l-r) Patron Hatcher, Micah Level, Maurice Barfield and Rodrequeze Snell
Not pictured: Traneisha Burns and Keosha Thomas*

The Student Achievement Month (SAM) contest helps students gain confidence and understand the importance of succeeding in school. More than 200 students progressed through local, regional, and state competitions. Many students that Communities In Schools serve have never been recognized for anything positive, and SAM provides an opportunity to honor them and celebrate successes. State winners receive laptop computers, printers, and educational software applicable to their grade level, courtesy of Walmart, and high school seniors can opt for a \$1,000 scholarship to an accredited college in lieu of prizes. Sponsors help defer the program costs and this year's Gold sponsors include Walmart, AGL Resources, Education2020, and Georgia Natural Gas.

SAM winning entries can be viewed at www.cisga.org and on our Facebook page. If you would like to become a sponsor or support SAM in other ways, visit our website or call the Communications Department at 404-897-2955.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



Neil Shorthouse

"Everyone talks about the weather but nobody can do anything about the weather." That's the way lots of people feel about improvements in our schools – everybody's talking and complaining but not many are doing anything or believing they can make a difference. We need to find a way to change this attitude so that everybody complaining can start thinking about ways to improve our schools. The truth is, however, that there are justifications for complaints. We have too many kids dropping out of school, not enough going to college and too many who attend college needing remediation courses.

The companion reality is that there are lots of people doing wonderful things to solve schools' problems, including the kids who attend. We highlight some of these terrific accomplishments by students who had gotten behind, off-track and lost during our recent Student Achievement Month Annual Awards Program. With the valiant efforts of parents, school folks and Communities In Schools volunteers, these kids have become fine students and have the work to prove it.

When volunteers work with teachers, link up with parents, or decide to become mentors, nearly always positive change occurs. One of the great things about Communities In Schools is our well-organized structure that ensures volunteers can make a difference. Last year our thousands of volunteers logged nearly 100,000 hours working with students and schools. That's a big reason that two-thirds of students served by CIS with prior history of academic failure improved, 874 more students earned fully accredited diplomas through our Performance Learning Centers, and 92.1% of at-risk elementary school students and 89.3 % of middle school students served by CIS advanced to the next grade.

Since our inception, we've always maintained that kids respond to people more than programs. There's nothing more powerful than a caring adult being committed to a child. So stop complaining about the weather and schools and contact CIS to join with us to change lives.

Student Achievement Month Celebration



Wanda Barrs, State Board of Education Chair, accepts the CIS Education Leadership Award.



Micah Level enjoys the audience welcome before he gives his winning speech.



Georgia's Agriculture Commissioner, Gary Black, provides encouraging words to the students.



SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Communities In Schools (CIS) is the nation's leading dropout prevention organization and we believe all students should receive some post-secondary education in order to develop marketable skills to compete in today's global workforce. Developing a partnership with the Board of Regents helps us to accomplish our goal for student success through the College Access Challenge grant. The grant engages numerous agencies and organizations across the state, helps underserved students navigate through the broad range of available state and local resources, and provides a better understanding regarding how higher education increases earning potential over a lifetime.



Through the partnership, CIS of Georgia created and administered a College Access Challenge mini-grant program that supports 22 college access programs to affiliate organizations. During this school year, the College Access Challenge mini-grant program supports five student-focused events across the state. Grant awards were distributed to affiliates of Junior Achievement of Georgia, Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Latin American Association, and Communities in Schools of Georgia. Events are being held in North Georgia, Middle Georgia, Valdosta, Savannah and Atlanta, with a goal of serving a minimum of 2,000 middle and high school students. The events focus on helping students gain access to crucial information that can help them learn more about their post-secondary options, including technical colleges, community colleges and four-year universities. Students also discuss career paths and administrative processes, such as admission logistics and applying for financial aid.

The statewide college access programs also provides an opportunity to interact with 50,000 underrepresented students and their families and ensure they have specific information and resources to help them succeed in a post-secondary education environment. Included in these programs is the promotion of re-enrollment into post-secondary institutions to adults who started but have not completed their post-secondary education.

CIS of Georgia continues to seek partners who can help us increase the engagement and enrollment in post-secondary education institutions. If you would like to get involved, contact Nancy Sanabria at 404-897-2395 or nsanabria@cisgeorgia.org.

Communities In Schools of Georgia Key Program Areas:

- **Mentoring**
- **Parent Engagement**
- **Performance Learning Centers®**
- **Literacy**
- **Youth Leadership Development**

Georgia CIS Local Programs

Albany/Dougherty	Decatur	Jefferson	Turner
Athens/Clarke	Dodge	Jenkins	Walton
Augusta/Richmond	Douglas	Laurens	Warren
Baldwin	Effingham	Marietta/Cobb	Washington
Barrow	Elbert	McDuffie	Wilkes
Berrien	Fitzgerald/Ben Hill	North Georgia (seven counties)	
Bulloch	Fulton/DeKalb	Rome/Floyd	
Burke	Glascocock	Savannah/Chatham	
Candler	Glynn	Screven	
Catoosa	Hancock	Stephens	
Cochran/Bleckley	Harris	Sumter	
Coweta	Hart	Troup	

CIS of Georgia provides training, technical assistance, and funding to locally managed programs to help young people succeed.

Communities In Schools of Georgia
600 West Peachtree Street, Suite 1200
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-888-5784/Fax 404-888-5789
800-838-5784
www.cisga.org

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Communities In Schools surrounds students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.