

# Turning Points



Communities  
In Schools

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF GEORGIA NEWS

SUMMER 2016

## Legislators Support CIS

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Georgia is gaining support in the General Assembly as more legislators understand CIS' contributions to improving public education on behalf of underserved students. Through strategic communications, personal visits and education information, relationships are strengthened between state legislators and CIS.

One document that provides legislators information regarding proof that CIS' dropout prevention and intervention programs have meaningful economic and social impact is the CIS of Georgia [Performance Audit](#). It was conducted by the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts at the request of the General Assembly. A highlight of this audit is the state's estimated return on investment of \$18 to \$1 for a high school graduate over his or her lifetime, based on current funding levels. The audit also concluded that CIS average graduation rates were higher than the statewide rates.

During the 2016 session of the General Assembly, CIS of Georgia not only reviewed the audit information but also provided legislators with a 2015-16 [report card](#). This information gave them a better understanding of CIS of Georgia and its role in increasing the state's graduation



rate. Additionally, CIS of Georgia hosted an event at the Capitol with lawmakers, which allowed for one-on-one conversations with many representatives and senators. Representative Brooks Coleman, Chairman of the House Education Committee and a supporter of CIS, spoke at the event and praised CIS for its work. During his motivational talk, Chairman Coleman made reference to Communities In Schools' business/community collaborations and its dedication to the students of Georgia.

The result of these efforts positions Communities In Schools as the premier model for integrated student support services, creating increased funding for CIS and a stronger connection with lawmakers' education goals.

Legislators understand the importance of partnerships and CIS of Georgia is focusing on increasing partnerships to improve dual enrollment, workforce readiness and work-based learning opportunities, which will boost graduation rates. As lawmakers learn more about CIS' goals with other state agencies and organizations such as the Technical College System of Georgia, Department of Juvenile Justice, and Great Promise Partnership, it enhances support. Additionally, these initiatives should have a positive impact on schools' CCRPI (College and Career Ready Performance Index), an indicator of dropout rates, and discipline and graduation rates for all Georgia public school students.

These new partnerships provide stronger connections throughout the state and allows CIS to serve more students.

*Senator John Kennedy enjoys conversation during CIS legislative breakfast*



## Calendar of **EVENTS**

CIS of Georgia  
Board of Directors Meeting **JUN** 28

[Site Coordinator Training](#) **AUG** 4-5

[Dine Out For Kids®](#) **AUG** 18



As summer approaches and the school year comes to an end, many families are focused on vacations and enriching activities. However, many at Communities In Schools are looking for ways to ensure children avoid the academic “summer slide” and are able to receive nutritious meals while school is not in session. Some affiliates in the Communities In Schools network offer activities which help to improve literacy and leadership skills, and enrichment experiences through art, music and photography. Some provide support for those in preparation for transition to college. While summer camps are great brain boosters and offer meals to students who may otherwise go without, this is also a time to contemplate how we can make a difference in the lives of our students who are facing academic and social challenges. I think about students like Ilavia, 2016 SAM winner, who until recently had some reading comprehension difficulty and did not enjoy reading. However, with one-on-one support from her CIS Site Coordinator, Ilavia's reading test scores have increased by 39%. Ilavia has now increased her chances of graduating high school because reading proficiency in the third and fourth grade is a strong indicator of success in school. Statistics state that a child who is not reading on grade level by third or fourth grade are at increased risk of dropping out of high school. If they are from a low-income family, the statistics are higher.

As caring adults, we can make a difference and ensure more children like Ilavia succeed in school. This summer will you think about how you can help underserved youth gain more opportunities so they are on par with their more affluent peers when the new school year begins? Some opportunities include mentoring, tutoring, volunteering at a CIS local affiliate or exploring ways you or your company can sponsor an academic enrichment program.

We can all succeed when we work together to build Georgia's talent pipeline for the future. Empowering and providing hope to students like Ilavia will increase graduation rates, strengthen Georgia's economy and support the kind of business growth we need as more workers are qualified to compete in a global marketplace.

## Legislators Seeking Public Input

Georgia's legislative education committee members, state board of education committee members, governor's education advisers and representatives from the state's Planning and Budgeting Office want to hear from the public



Image courtesy of Stuart Miles at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

on a number of educational issues that will be discussed during next year's legislative session. They particularly want feedback from teachers, principals, local school board members and superintendents regarding testing, teacher and leader evaluations, pay for performance, and math and reading instruction. These listening sessions across the state will provide different perspectives as they review recommendations from the Education Reform Commission. Look for a session in your area during the coming months.

## Did You Know?

- **Communities In Schools of Georgia**, the state office, equips local affiliates and their site coordinators with tools to build capacity for sustainability and grow the Georgia network of 121,255 CIS students. Many in our network participated in the Communities In Schools National graduation campaign, Pass the Cap. The campaign celebrated students and the collective efforts of everyone who helped support the 1.5 million CIS students in the national network get to graduation or promotion day.
- **Communities In Schools and Public Opinion Strategies** completed a national poll of 1,200 likely 2016 voters and 68% say improving K-12 public education should be a top priority for the next president.
- **Communities In Schools of Atlanta** raised \$530,000 during their 12th annual Choose Success Awards Dinner.
- **Communities In Schools of Fitzgerald/Ben Hill** conducted their annual Celebrity Dinner and netted \$32,000.
- **Communities In Schools of Athens/Clarke County** received a \$1 million AT&T grant to improve graduation rates.

### Site Coordinator Award Winner

# Ashley Hoffenberg

**A**s the 2016 CIS of Georgia site coordinator award winner, Ashley Hoffenberg from CIS of Marietta/Cobb said collaborative efforts are the key to success with middle school students. She is thankful her CIS executive director and program manager provides connections to community members and resources that will help her students. Ashley credits the tools and techniques learned from a CIS of Georgia training as the reason she is able to manage, her caseload and create the needs assessment and school support plan. She also appreciates the opportunities CIS of Georgia trainings provide to network with other site coordinators around the state.

Ashley conveys to all of her caseload students the need to take responsibility for effective study habits. She utilized her training to create a homework group. There were 15 students in this group and she taught them effective study skills. These students consistently missed numerous classroom assignments every quarter, and she knew good study habits would help them earn better grades and become more successful in school. She met with them individually, checked progress reports on a weekly basis, provided homework assistance and connected them with community resources when needed. Additionally, Ashley understands the importance of a safe, relaxed

environment and listening one-on-one to student's challenges when they want to share personal concerns.

Ashley's motivational attitude and diligence is why students said that she is caring, easy to talk to, trustworthy and calming when they are angry. These attributes are also the reason they nominated her for the site coordinator award.



Ashley Hoffenberg receives 2016 CIS of Georgia Site Coordinator Award from board member Mickey Nall.



# Student Achievement Celebration

The Student Achievement Month (SAM) contest is designed to increase confidence, provide recognition and be a catalyst for students succeed in school.

## Platinum Sponsors

Arby's Foundation, Georgia Natural Gas, Walmart

## SAM Gold Sponsor

AGL Resources

## Silver Sponsor

Frazier & Deeter



Front Row (l-r) Jasmine Cortez, Jeremiah Baxter, Quintrell Roundtree and Ilavia Smalls  
Back Row (l-r) Krystal Foster, Nateisha Wingfield, Dextriona Gibson, Hershell Holliday and Milsan Castro



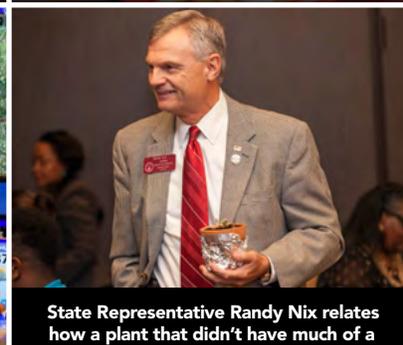
Jasmine Cortez with her Varsity meal.



Quincy Springs, Walmart Manager, one of many giving Jeremiah Baxter a standing ovation after his speech.



SAM students enjoying CBS newscast area.



State Representative Randy Nix relates how a plant that didn't have much of a chance to thrive due to negligence and isolation did so after care and attention, much like how CIS helps kids succeed.



Jeremiah Baxter gives his winning speech during the luncheon.



State Representative Stacey Abrams provides congratulatory remarks.



SAM students with Gloria Neal, CBS anchor and Jim Loznicka, meteorologist.



Arthur "Skin" Edge, Georgia Link partner, greets a SAM luncheon attendee, along with State Representative Tom Dixon (r) and State Representative Randy Nix.



Milsan Castro with her winning picture.



Dextriona Gibson with her Burke County crew.



Quintrell Roundtree.



Wendell Dallas, CIS of Georgia board member and Catalina Garcia-Quick, CIS of Savannah executive director.

## Communities In Schools of Georgia Network Key Program Areas:

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

## Georgia CIS Local Programs

Albany/Dougherty	Cochran/Bleckley	Marietta/Cobb
Athens/Clarke	Coweta	Rome/Floyd
Atlanta	Dodge	Savannah/Chatham
Augusta/Richmond	Douglas	Troup
Baldwin	Fitzgerald/Ben Hill	Turner
Berrien	Glascok	Walton
Burke	Glynn	Warren
Candler	Hancock	Washington
Carrollton/Carroll	Hart	Wilkes
Catoosa	Henry	
Central Georgia	Laurens	

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

## Communities In Schools of Georgia

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[www.cisga.org](http://www.cisga.org)

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

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 [youtube.com/CISofGeorgia](https://youtube.com/CISofGeorgia)

 [twitter.com/CISofGeorgia](https://twitter.com/CISofGeorgia)

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**T**he Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the first major restructuring of federal education law in almost 15 years. The passage of ESSA follows years of debate about the right balance of federal vs. local influence in public education. It will give our local schools more flexibility to decide what works best for Georgia students. Equally important is new language in the law about the Title 1 program, which invests critical resources to educate the poorest children.

Communities In Schools (CIS) made a strong case to Congress to ensure ESSA allows Title I funding for proven integrated student supports that keep kids in school, improve academic achievement and ensure youth stay on the path to graduation. Through our lobbying efforts, the CIS wraparound services is specifically identified as a program eligible for funding under the \$15 billion Title I program. Moreover, CIS has undergone 13 independent evaluations which demonstrated its effectiveness through evidence-based student support interventions for at-risk children. These evaluations make CIS a powerful and cost-effective school improvement support solution. Additionally, many services provided by CIS are now in the authorized program

areas under ESSA in both Title I and Title IV, including literacy, family engagement, site coordination such as integrated student supports, dropout prevention and re-entry, and bullying prevention.

As our state and school districts get wider discretion regarding dropout prevention and intervention strategies, particularly with the lowest-performing Title I schools and high schools with poor graduation rates, Communities In Schools of Georgia is looking ahead to secure partnerships for competitive Title I and IV grants when they are released. It is our goal to provide disadvantaged youth with the same academic opportunities their more affluent peers have. With ESSA, Georgia will have the flexibility to utilize existing resources in a different manner to make sure every child has a chance to succeed in school.



# Partnership Opportunities