

Communities in Schools: 2015-2016

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At-a-Glance

Communities in Schools (CIS) is the largest dropout prevention program in the State of Texas. CIS is administered through the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and has been funded by the Texas Legislature since 1989. CIS provides coordinated, integrated services to students and their families with the goal of ensuring the student's academic success. Communities in Schools Dallas Region (CISDR) has been serving students in the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD) since 1985 beginning with Maple Lawn Elementary School. In the 2015-16 school year, CISDR served 1,606 students in 15 schools. Students are referred into the program from teachers, counselors, parents, school nurses, whomever the principals designate as a source including self-referrals.

Communities in Schools Student Characteristics

Table 1 shows that eight of the 15 schools where CIS provided services were at the elementary level, which served almost half (46%) of all CIS students. CIS staff served more students at the elementary school level (731) than at the middle (375) or high school levels (500).

Table 1: Campuses of CIS Students

School	N	%
High School		
Adams	149	9.3
Jefferson	154	9.6
Pinkston	94	5.9
Skyline	103	6.4
High School Total	500	31.1
Middle School		
Garcia	114	7.1
Manns	100	6.2
Rusk	161	10.0
Middle School Total	375	23.3
Elementary School		
Bush	73	4.5
Cabell	61	3.8
Halliday	49	3.1
Knight	101	6.3
Maple Lawn	151	9.4
Peeler	108	6.7
Reagan	100	6.2
Rosemont	88	5.5
Elementary Total	731	45.5

Characteristics of CIS students are presented in Table 2. A higher proportion of female students received services from CIS (56%) than male students (44%). A higher percentage of homeless students received

services from CIS (5%) relative to their percent in the district (2%). Also, a higher percentage of LEP students (56%) received services from CIS relative to the district percentage (43%).

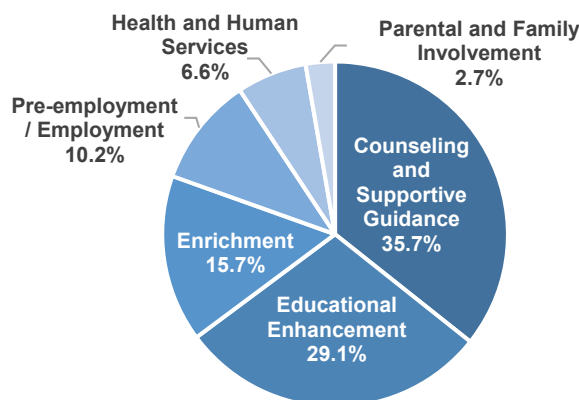
Table 2: Characteristics of CIS Students

	CIS		DISD	
	N	%	N	%
Race/Ethnicity				
Hispanic	1,251	77.9	111,440	70.2
African American	309	19.2	35,905	22.6
White	28	1.7	7,621	4.8
Other	18	1.1	3,681	2.4
Gender				
Female	900	56.0	77,581	48.9
Male	706	44.0	81,066	51.1
LEP	904	56.3	68,087	42.9
Subgroups				
Talented and Gifted	142	8.8	20,783	13.1
Special Education	154	9.6	11,824	7.5
Econ Disadvantage	1,521	94.7	138,134	87.1
At-Risk	1,414	88.0	102,287	64.5
Homeless	78	4.9	5,566	2.2

Services CIS Provided to Students

CIS students received an average of 10 unique services, 19 total sessions, and 12 total hours. The percentage of time devoted to each category of services is shown in Figure 1. The largest percentage of time was devoted to counseling and supportive guidance (36%) followed by educational enhancement (29%), enrichment services (16%), and pre-employment and employment services (10%).

Figure 1: Percentage of Time Devoted to Each Category of Services



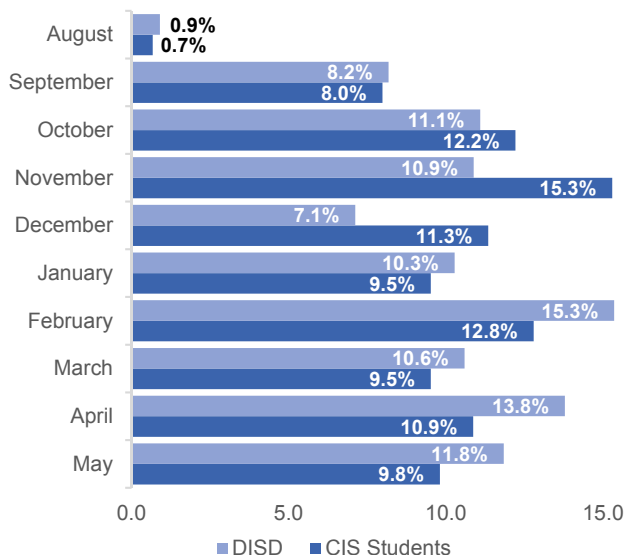
Elementary school students received more hours of educational enhancement services than other grade

levels while high school students received more pre-employment and employment services than other grade levels.

Attendance Rates and Disciplinary Referrals

Two hundred and ninety-two (292) CIS students (18%) received at least one disciplinary referral during the 2015-16 school year. More than half of these students (55%) were admitted into the program in the first six weeks of the school year. CIS students generally received a lower percentage of disciplinary referrals in the latter months of the school year (Figure 2). District students, in contrast, received a higher percentage of disciplinary referrals in the latter months of the school year.

Figure 2: Percentage of Disciplinary Referrals per Month



The attendance data for CIS students were analyzed throughout the school year to measure student attendance after entering the program. The average percentage of days attended decreased by 2.1 percentage points for all CIS students after entry in the program. A similar trend was observed for all at-risk students in the district.

CIS Staff

Sixty percent (60%) of CIS staff members had less than one year of experience working in CIS. Twenty percent (20%) of CIS staff had three or more years of experience. A majority of CIS staff members (60%) had a background in social work. Other common backgrounds of CIS staff members were education (45%), psychology (20%) and mental health counseling (10%). Percentages exceed 100% because CIS staff members have backgrounds in multiple fields.

CIS staff delivered services in a variety of learning environments. One-on-one learning environments were the most common, utilized by 60 percent of CIS staff. Large group learning environments were the least

utilized. CIS staff were asked by campus leadership to take on additional roles outside the CIS framework. These tasks included lunch duty, hall monitoring, assisting in parental involvement activities and chaperoning field trips.

CIS Principal Survey

A survey was constructed to understand the thoughts and experiences of principals whose schools received CIS services during the 2015-16 school year. Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "CIS provided valuable resources to students." Approximately 72 percent of principals strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "I believe CIS was effective in reducing student dropout." Twenty-three (23%) percent neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

When asked to specify the top services that CIS staff provided to students during the 2015-16 school year, the most frequently listed services were: parental support/family engagement, small group activities, tutoring, and community partnerships/resources. When asked what roles they would like to have expanded, the most frequently listed responses were: increase in community partnerships/resources, additional parental contact/involvement, more involvement in counseling services, and instructional support.

Summary

The TEA managed data portal that CIS employed does not grant access to identifying student information from previous years. Furthermore, dropout data is a lag variable and always a year behind. Due to the lack of previous years' rosters and the unavailability of dropout data until July 2017, the findings of this report are limited to the available data concerning the students, services, and staff of the program during the 2015-16 school year. CIS provided a large variety of services to students who demonstrated early warning signs of dropping out of school. These services were delivered by 20 CIS staff members serving 1,606 students in 15 Dallas ISD schools. The principals of these schools valued the services that CIS provided.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings of the evaluation.

- Record and store identifying student information (e.g. student ID numbers or social security numbers) so longitudinal analysis can be conducted in future evaluations.
- Provide more comprehensive case management documentation training and support.
- Establish consistent data sharing relationships prior to the start of the school year.
- Reduce the turnover rate for CIS staff members.

For more information, see EA16-603-2, available at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>.