

LOCAL

# See how Communities in Schools is impacting Cleveland County students

The Star

Published 5:24 a.m. ET March 25, 2024 | Updated 5:24 a.m. ET March 25, 2024

Communities in Schools of Cleveland County recently shared the latest student outcome data from the 2022-23 school year showing that students in the CIS program are thriving with a higher graduation rate than non-CIS students.

The CIS model uses evidence-based wraparound supports that focus on attendance, behavior, coursework/college and career readiness and parent engagement.

Key findings independently validated by RTI International from the 2022-23 school year show that of the 451 students served by CIS:

77% of students met or made progress toward their behavioral goals

81% of students in grades k-11 were promoted to the next grade level

94% of seniors graduated

“Consistent with our name – Communities in Schools – we bring community resources directly into schools. We connect students with what they need to show up to school prepared and ready to engage in learning and ultimately reach the graduation stage,” said Heather Bridges Moore, Communities in Schools’ president and CEO.

One example of this success in action is illustrated by Demetrius, a student who had been missing school, according to a press release from CIS.

He told his CIS graduation coach that his teeth hurt, which was one reason he had not been in class. She arranged for him to see a dentist and took him to appointments. She also helped him develop a strategy for his senior project.

Demetrius became the first person in his family to graduate from high school, according to the press release.

But graduation for students like Demetrius is only the first step. Equipping them with a plan is critical, especially since the jobs landscape in North Carolina is changing.

Right now, there aren't enough skilled workers to meet the need. It's estimated that by 2030, more than 2 million workers with post-secondary credentials or degrees will be needed to fill the labor market and keep the state's economy thriving. That's why CIS helps create experiences that expose students to local careers and consider education beyond high school, all while building key employability skills like communication, accountability, critical thinking and collaboration that NC DPI and Forbes Magazine both agree are crucial for jobs with family-sustaining wages in the emerging workforce.

“We know that the more students succeed, the stronger our community becomes. More graduates build a more robust workforce and a more prosperous economy for Cleveland County,” said Chris Kelm of Clearwater Paper, a longtime supporter of Communities in Schools.