

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS SPRING 2014 REPORT

CHANGING THE PICTURE OF EDUCATION IN NEW MEXICO





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**CHANGING THE PICTURE OF EDUCATION
IN NEW MEXICO**

“New Mexico ranks 50th in the nation for child well-being, education and food security, and our state’s dropout rate is at 63%. Increasingly, research indicates a direct correlation between poverty, educational success and graduation rates. Until the trauma associated with living in poverty is addressed — be it homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence, access to medical care, food, clothing or behavioral health supports — children cannot be expected to show up at school prepared to focus, engage and learn. Communities In Schools’ integrated student support framework provides a seamless structure for mitigating those socio-economic obstacles that often stand in the way of a young person’s ability to learn and succeed. By connecting children and families in need with the right community resources, Communities In Schools helps build greater stability for the child and family, ensuring children are given a fair chance at succeeding.”

—**JULIA BERGEN**, STATE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO



Communities In Schools is a nationwide network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Over the last two years, Communities In Schools of New Mexico (CISNM) has served more than 5,500 students in the Santa Fe area alone. This year Communities In Schools of New Mexico is serving more than 4,500 students in seven schools, helping to break the cycle of poverty, academic failure and underemployment.

This report outlines the accomplishments of Communities In Schools of New Mexico during the 2013 – 2014 school year. It includes data on the percentage of students who were promoted from one grade to another, data on the percentage of students who improved their performance (be it attendance, academic, or behavioral) as a result of their involvement with Communities In Schools of New Mexico, and uses stories from the community to describe how this success was achieved.

“Children in poverty come to school every day with tremendous burdens that hinder their ability to learn. It’s hard to focus on math or reading when you’re hungry or sick or worried about where you’re going to sleep at night. In those conditions, it can seem like the ‘escape valve’ has been welded shut from the outside.”

—**DANIEL CARDINALI**, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF NEW MEXICO

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“Most of my students come from really poor, low-income families, and Communities In Schools of New Mexico helps them get the food, clothing and supplies they need. CISNM also provides incredible volunteer tutors who help students in the classroom and after school. The site coordinator and volunteer tutors provide extra sets of eyes and hands in the classroom, giving my students attention, guidance and support. It is so important for the students to feel accepted by someone other than just the teacher. The kids feel really special when they get to work with the site coordinator and volunteers.

—**KARINA MENTER**, TEACHER, SALAZAR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Communities In Schools is the only dropout prevention organization proven to both lower dropout rates and increase graduation rates (based on a five year national study conducted by ICF International and underwritten by The Atlantic Philanthropies). What sets Communities In Schools apart is the organization’s holistic approach to addressing both the academic and nonacademic needs of students. Working with school staff, Communities In Schools site coordinators — who are positioned in schools — identify students in danger of dropping out, assess what resources they need, and then provide those resources through the appropriate community partnerships. These resources include food, clothing, transportation, housing, medical care, mentoring and much more.



THE SITE COORDINATOR

ELIZABETH CRUMPLER joined the Communities In Schools of New Mexico team in August 2013 after having worked at FACT (Fine Arts for Children & Teens) and Girls Inc. providing high-quality educational experiences for young people throughout northern New Mexico. As the CISNM site coordinator at an elementary school, Elizabeth addresses the many needs of students every day. “I see a lot of kids with instability in their lives. Poverty makes it really tough for students to focus on learning and doing well — they show up at school tired, hungry, neglected, and often scared and unsure about everything. When they know they can reach out to me for support and help, it really makes a difference in how they see themselves.” Young people need stable adults in their lives to help them become self-reliant, empathetic and self-confident individuals. Working with organizations like the Food Depot and Big Brothers Big Sisters, Elizabeth connects the right resources with the right kids, giving them the tools and skills to make the right decisions in school, at home and with their peers.



THE PRINCIPAL

VANESSA ROMERO, principal of Salazar Elementary School, knows first-hand the obstacles that students face every day. Having another “set of eyes” in the school definitely makes a positive difference in the lives of children and Principal Romero sees how critical the role CISNM plays is to the success of her school. Because of the work of the CISNM site coordinator, Principal Romero has seen an increase in student attendance, noteworthy academic improvements for the students that have been paired with volunteer tutors, and a more committed and engaged parent base. “Our Communities In Schools of New Mexico site coordinator helps us attend to the myriad challenges that come up on any given day and works closely with the school leadership team to develop positive, preventive strategies so we may begin to be more proactive in helping students solve problems and succeed. Having Communities In Schools at our school is awesome — they see and understand the big picture and are able to effectively and efficiently get things done for our children and families.”

Communities In Schools recognizes that if basic needs are not met, children are unable to learn.



Working with each school’s administration, Communities In Schools identifies students who lack basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter, and utilizes community resources to assist with meeting these needs. Other whole-school offerings include parenting programs, grief and loss counseling, and bullying prevention programs.



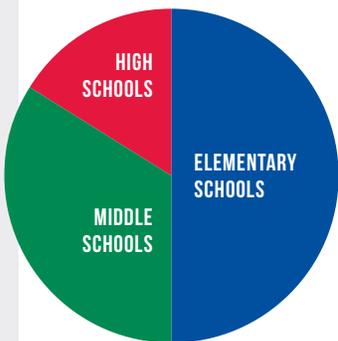
THE VOLUNTEER

Communities In Schools of New Mexico volunteer **MICHELE LEE CHRABOT** learned about volunteering through her Quaker community in Santa Fe. Having worked as a foster grandparent for many years, Michele is keenly aware of the challenges many of our community’s families and young people face. As a former educator herself, Michele acknowledges that students need numerous positive role models in the classroom, especially when class sizes are too big. “I find it so personally rewarding to be a volunteer tutor. I know I am helping the children and the teacher is so grateful for the support and care I can give to her students when some of them don’t get enough attention at home. I tutor five mornings a week with the same kindergarten class focusing on reading, writing and science projects. This semester the kids have been writing stories — and writing complete sentences, already! It is such a joy to spend my time with them because I am able to support their learning, give them help where they need it and show them what is possible for them in life. I know I am making a difference in their lives.”

All of Communities In Schools’ work is guided by the “Five Basics” — a set of essentials that every child needs and deserves:



- A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- A safe place to learn and grow
- A healthy start and a healthy future
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation
- A chance to give back to peers and community



SANTA FE SCHOOLS SERVED BY COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

Communities In Schools of New Mexico

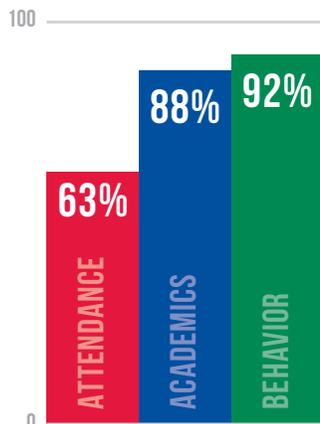
2013 – 2014 School Year Highlights

- › Four elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school were served.
- › This year, approximately 4,500 students received integrated student supports from Communities In Schools of New Mexico. 4,250 students received Level One* or school-wide prevention services, and 242 students received Level Two** targeted and sustained interventions.

*Level One services, also known as whole-school preventative services, are provided to all students, regardless of their risk for developing serious problems. Examples of these services include health fairs, attendance initiatives, anti-bullying campaigns, parent engagement activities/events, and motivational speakers.

**Level Two services are targeted and sustained interventions provided for specific students over an extended period of time. These services are provided based on individual student needs and include services such as one-on-one academic tutoring, mentoring, coordination of medical or dental resources, and counseling.

› **95% of the students in grades K – 11 who received targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) were promoted to the next grade.**



› **63%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an attendance goal met their goal. For some students, the goal was to increase the number of days they attended and for others it was to maintain their attendance levels.

› **88%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an academic performance goal met their goal. These goals, which are tailored to each student, may have included improving class grades, overall GPA, standardized test scores, or homework completion.

› **92%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with a behavioral goal met their goal. This relates to school behavior and can include: improving classroom behavior and reducing disciplinary referrals for fighting, disruptive or disrespectful behavior (bad language, poor attitude, etc.).

“The best part about school is Miss Elizabeth [the Communities In Schools site coordinator]. Miss Elizabeth is always there for me if I need to check in or to just ask her a question. If I am having a tough day, I know she will take some time to help me figure things out. Some days, we draw together, or she lets me help her fill the backpacks with food for kids who need extra food at home. She even helped me make a best friend chart when I was having a fight with my best friend. Miss Elizabeth helped us figure out how we wanted to be as friends and what it means to be a good friend. I am really lucky to have Miss Elizabeth.”

–JAZZLYN, STUDENT