



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

**\*\* ATTN TV REPORTERS: B-ROLL AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST \*\***

CONTACT: Glenn Turner | 917-817-3396 | [glenn@ripplestrategies.com](mailto:glenn@ripplestrategies.com)  
Shayna Samuels | 718-541-4785 | [shayna@ripplestrategies.com](mailto:shayna@ripplestrategies.com)  
Steve Majors | 703.518.2554 | [majorss@cisnet.org](mailto:majorss@cisnet.org)

## **New National Report Highlights Unexpected Reasons Why Students Drop Out of School**

**On Eve of 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Nation's Largest  
Dropout Prevention Organization Says Today's Education Landscape is "Anything but Equal"**

Arlington, Va. - May 14, 2014 - [Communities In Schools](http://www.CommunitiesInSchools.org) (CIS), the nation's largest organization dedicated to keeping kids in school and helping them succeed in life, today released a national report along with 24 local and state reports, demonstrating the unexpected reasons why kids drop out of school, and highlighting what CIS does to help them overcome these obstacles and make it to graduation.

The report, "[Changing the Picture of Education in America](#)," sheds new light on last month's U.S. Department of Education report announcing the highest graduation rates in history. Operating in 26 states and the District of Columbia, CIS works with 1.3 million kids in grades K-12. Ninety-six percent of 12<sup>th</sup> graders who were served by CIS graduated last year, according to the new report, many of whom were high-risk and not likely to graduate otherwise.

The CIS report also comes days before the nation marks the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision this Saturday.

"Even though 80 percent of students in the U.S. are graduating, that still leaves more than one million students – disproportionately poor, African American and Hispanic – with no cap, no gown and no opportunity," said Dan Cardinali, president of Communities In Schools. "Today's education landscape is anything but equal. Until we take a long, hard look at the invisible 20 percent who drop out, we can never make good on *Brown's* promise of equal opportunity for all."

The report highlights unexpected reasons those one million kids drop out of school each year including hunger, inadequate medical care, lack of reliable transportation and the need for warm, clean clothes and shoes. The lack of these basic necessities can make it impossible for students to focus on the academic subjects required for graduation and a productive adulthood.

CIS partners with schools and their communities to mobilize resources and deliver integrated supports to students so they can focus on learning. The majority of CIS case-managed students in 2012-13 (the latest year for which statistics are available) were Hispanic or Latino (43%), followed by African-American (35%) and White (18%), and nearly all (92%) were eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch.

Today's report also profiles two seniors, Rackeem Miller and Terin Valentine, who will be graduating this spring with the help of CIS.

Rackeem Miller, a senior at John Dickinson High School in Wilmington, Del., had a challenging family environment, resulting in behavioral issues at school which led to a suspension. A faculty member referred Rackeem to the school's CIS site coordinator, Ronnell Page, who got him back on track. "I probably wouldn't be in school right now if it wasn't for Mr. Page," said Rackeem. "I had given up on myself."

Terin Valentine, a senior at Cardozo High School in Washington, D.C., was often absent because he didn't have a reliable way to get to school. Terin's CIS site coordinator, Jason McCrady, arranged transportation for Terin, and provided him with ongoing counseling to cope with a difficult situation at home. "The simplest things that many of us take for granted can be major obstacles in these students' lives," said McCrady. Not only has his attendance picked up, but Terin's GPA has improved, and he's now an editor of the school newspaper and plans to go to college next year.

In addition to the *Changing the Picture of Education* reports released today, PSA's created by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Errol Morris and renowned photographer David Harriman are also running around the country, featuring CIS students who have overcome tremendous obstacles in order to graduate. The PSA's are running right now on a billboard in Times Square, in a recent edition of the *Wall Street Journal*, in smaller newspapers and on TV stations nationwide.

Beginning May 19, Communities In Schools will begin spearheading an online celebration of graduations around the country through real-time social media interactions. More information about this can be found <http://www.communitiesinschools.org/classofchange/>

# # #

**ATTN REPORTERS:** The full *Changing the Picture of Education in America* report, along with PSA's, infographics and other background materials, can be found [here](#). One-on-one interviews with CIS President Dan Cardinali, CIS site coordinators and graduating seniors are also available upon request.

**ATTN TV REPORTERS:** High quality B-Roll and interview footage is available upon request including: excerpts from interviews with CIS President Dan Cardinali and CIS Board Chairman Elaine Wynn; plus PSA's by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Errol Morris.

### **About Communities In Schools**

Working with both schools and their surrounding communities, Communities In Schools does whatever it takes to help kids stay in school and succeed in life. Based directly inside schools throughout the country, Communities In Schools connects students and their families to basic and critical educational and community-based resources, tailored to each student's specific needs. Operating in more than 2,200 schools in the most challenged communities of 26 states and the District of Columbia, Communities In Schools serves 1.3 million young people and their families every year. As the nation's leading dropout prevention organization, Communities In Schools is the only one proven to both decrease dropout rates and increase graduation rates. For more information on Communities In Schools, please visit: [www.CommunitiesInSchools.org](http://www.CommunitiesInSchools.org)