



**Ohio House Finance Committee
Interested Party Written Testimony
HB 96- State Operating Budget
March 13, 2025**

Adero Robinson, CEO of Communities In Schools of Ohio

Chair Stewart, Vice Chair Dovilla, and Ranking Member Sweeney and members of the Finance Committee — Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on House Bill 96 in support of Communities in Schools' funding request which would appropriate \$500,000 in each fiscal year through the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services TANF Block Grant appropriation to provide comprehensive supports for vulnerable youth for wraparound services, which help address chronic absenteeism and directly impact academic success.

My name is Adero Robinson, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Communities in Schools of Ohio.

Communities In Schools of Ohio (CIS) is a statewide nonprofit dedicated to surrounding students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. CIS of Ohio works inside schools to connect students to caring adults, community resources, and the support they need to overcome barriers to success. During the 2023-2024 school year, CIS of Ohio's site coordinators worked with over 35,000 Ohio students, helping 78% increase their attendance.

In line with Ohio's initiative to reduce chronic absenteeism, CIS of Ohio aims to deepen our efforts, working collaboratively with families, schools, and community partners to create sustainable solutions for keeping students in the classroom. CIS of Ohio prioritizes students who have academic, behavioral, or attendance needs. Many students experience multiple adverse childhood experiences and often lack the support needed to meet their basic living and social-emotional needs. These students typically come from low-income backgrounds and are exposed to various challenges such as violence, substance abuse, homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, and other issues that hinder their ability to focus on learning in the classroom.

CIS partners with schools by placing site coordinators in schools full-time to assess and address students' individual needs. These coordinators provide tailored, tiered support ranging from school-wide interventions to one-on-one case management, primarily targeting chronic absenteeism, academic challenges, and behavioral issues. By addressing obstacles such as housing insecurity, transportation difficulties, and mental health concerns, site coordinators empower students to overcome barriers to success.

Using an evidence-based model, CIS takes an innovative and holistic approach to meet both the academic and non-academic needs of students. CIS partners with the following school districts: Columbus City Schools, South-Western City Schools, Whitehall City Schools, National Heritage

Academies, Cleveland Heights – University Heights Schools, Garfield Heights City Schools, plus FLEX High School, Green Inspiration Academy, Harambee Christian School, and Graham Elementary and Middle School.

I respectfully request your support of our budget amendment, which would allocate \$500,000 per fiscal year to Communities In Schools of Ohio. This investment by the state will leverage private and foundation dollars in support of CIS to expand into high-need school districts and serve an additional 10-15 schools over the next two years.