



**Ohio Senate Health Committee
Interested Party Written Testimony
HB 96- State Operating Budget
May 13, 2025**

Adero Robinson, CEO of Communities In Schools of Ohio

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, and Ranking Member Liston and members of the Senate Health Committee — Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **House Bill 96** in support of Communities In Schools of Ohio funding request which would appropriate **\$250,000** 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, Chief Executive Officer for Communities In Schools of Ohio (CIS). Our mission is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

CIS is a nonprofit that partners with school districts statewide, placing full-time site coordinators in schools to identify student needs and connect them with supportive adults and community resources to help them stay in school.

Using an evidence-based model, site coordinators deliver tiered support—from school-wide programs to individualized case management—focusing on students facing chronic absenteeism, academic struggles, or behavioral issues to help them overcome barriers and succeed.

Aligned with Ohio's goal to reduce chronic absenteeism, CIS is strengthening its efforts by working with schools, families, and community partners to keep students in class. Chronic absenteeism remains a major barrier to learning, with a statewide rate of 25.6%. Missing too many school days leads to lower academic performance, skill gaps, higher dropout risk, and social, mental, and physical health challenges—especially for students in low-income communities facing issues like housing instability, food insecurity, limited access to transportation, and basic needs.

In the past year, CIS partnered with 61 schools, supported over 35,000 students, engaged 13,800 families, and provided 3,668 school-wide services. Among our 2,700 case-managed students, 78% improved attendance, 79% improved behavior, 80% improved academically, and 93% of supported seniors graduated—highlighting CIS's impact on student success.

This school year, CIS is partnering with 52 schools across districts including Columbus City, South-Western City, Whitehall City, Cleveland Heights–University Heights, Garfield Heights, and National Heritage Academies, as well as FLEX High School, Green Inspiration Academy, Harambee Christian School, and Graham Elementary and Middle School.

With state investment through the TANF Block Grant in the last two General Assembly state operating budgets, we expanded our impact from central Ohio to schools across the state.

I respectfully request your support of our budget amendment, which would allocate **\$250,000** per fiscal year to Communities In Schools of Ohio. This state investment will help CIS attract private and foundation funding to expand into high-need districts and serve 10–15 additional schools over the next two years.

Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.