Communities In Schools Briefing
Joint Legislative Committee on Dropouts

Linda R. Harrill, President and CEO

James Speed, CEO, NC Mutual Life Insurance
Board Member

March 13, 2008

Why Do Kids Drop Out?

In 2007, the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network looked at 44 of the most relevant research citations to determine why children drop out of school. Those sources that were selected because they met rigorous standards confirmed the following findings and trends, among others:

- No single risk factor can predict a dropout
- Multiple factors are the best predictor
- Often results from long process of disengagement with identifiable markers
- Complex interactions among factors
- Factors cross domains – school-related push and non-school-related pull kids out of school

What's the Dropout Problem Costing Us?

Dropouts cost the state in real dollars as a result of: *reduced earnings*; *greater likelihood of unemployment*, *of criminal activity and lifelong incarceration*, and *of being unwed parents*; plus *a predisposition for unhealthy lifestyles*

- The per-year, median cost of each dropout is $5,483[1]
- Last year, the dropouts from the freshman class of 2002-2003 cost North Carolina $170,620,000[2]
- Last year, the 1.35 million dropouts[3] in our state cost taxpayers $7.4 billion[4]

[1] The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts; [2] Number of DPI-reported cohort dropouts times footnote 1; [3] United States Census Bureau; [4] Footnote 1 times footnote 3
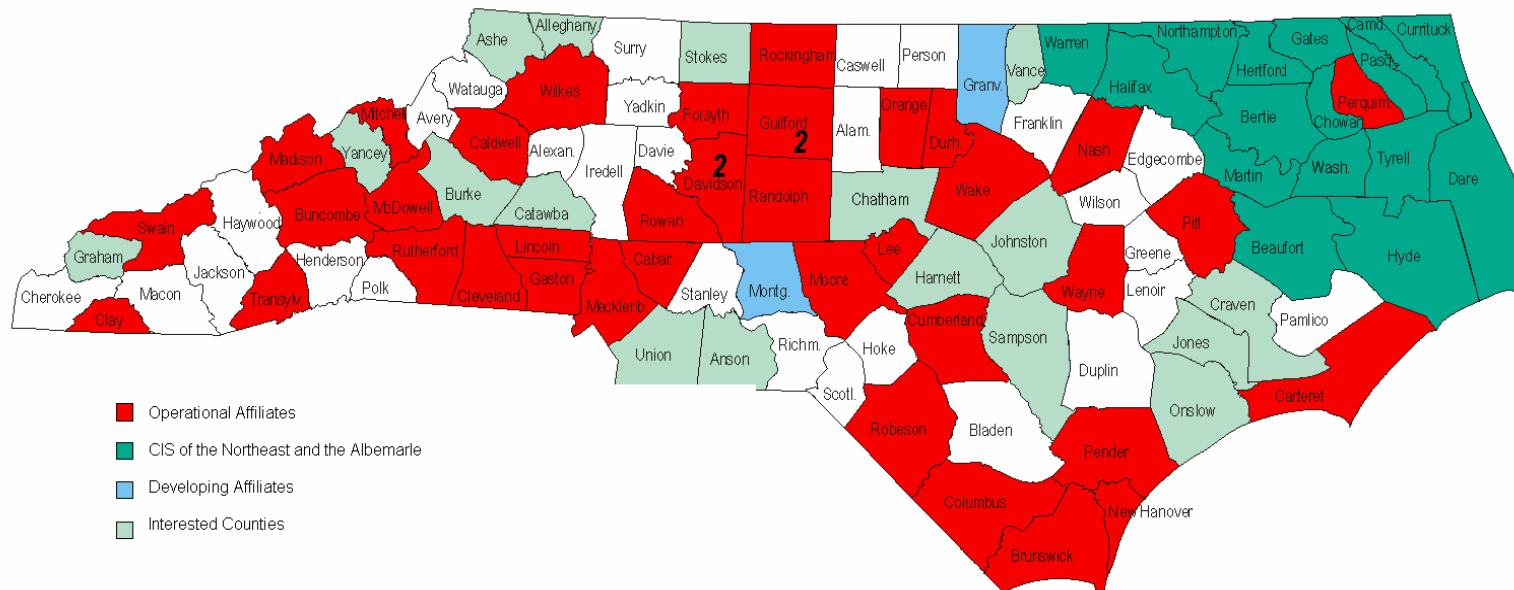
What CIS Does to Keep Kids in School

➢ CIS is a process that brings to bear at the school site comprehensive integrated student support services with over 3,000 community partners and other resources in North Carolina that work holistically to help eliminate the problems experienced by children and their families

➢ Studies have consistently shown that comprehensive, integrated student support services correlate more strongly with positive school-level outcomes than does service provided without integrated student support

Communities In Schools

Where We Are - 2008

Today, CIS:
- Provides wide-ranging services to 38 county and 4 independent LEA
- Provides limited services to 18 additional LEA in the northeast
- We are in 18 of the largest 25 LEA in the state
- The LEA we serve educate 70 percent (998k) of the state's public school children
- We are working with 17 other counties interested in the CIS process

How Do We Know We're Effective?

➢Ten years of reliable data of year-end results from NC affiliates
- Tracked year-to-year assessing trends and analyzing incongruities
- Statistically significant
- Dropout-related data tracked identically with DPI data

More significant, however, is this

➢At the conclusion of the first three years of an independent, third-party, longitudinal study funded by Atlantic Philanthropies, ICF (formerly Caliber), recently announced that *"Communities In Schools is the **only** dropout prevention program in the nation **proven** to **increase** graduation rates, graduating students on time with a standard high school diploma"*

Effective Strategies – Mentoring/Tutoring

All of the local CIS affiliates in North Carolina provide mentors/ tutors. During the 2006-2007 school year, North Carolina's CIS affiliates:

- Recruited 9,500 mentors and tutors
- Posted 360,000 hours of mentor/tutor services provided to CIS kids valued at $6,521,000
- Also involved hundreds of high school students who provided tutoring for CIS kids in feeder elementary schools. This actually qualifies as a different effective strategy – service learning and/or community service
- Several CIS affiliates awarded grants for tutoring projects. For example, Moore County recently received a $500K grant for project COMPASS (Community of Mentors Producing Academically Successful Students) Mentoring Program

Communities In Schools

Effective Strategies – Community Collaboration

A strong community-based infrastructure sustains a caring environment where youth are able to thrive and achieve. Again, all CIS programs involved their communities in a variety of ways. Across the state, 3,083 different community partners provided support for CIS kids last year.

- CIS of Cape Fear is creating WIRE - Wilmington Youth Center for Inspiration, Recreation and Education (WIRE), in the Harrelson Building, the site of the old county jail
- With several community partners, CIS of Wilkes County created DanCIS (Dance + CIS)
- On Saturday, March 15, 2008, Healthcare Career Expo in Charlotte will serve hundreds of kids, CIS and non-CIS alike

Effective Strategies – Alternative Schools

Alternative Schools provide potential dropouts and reclaimed dropouts options that can lead to graduation, with programs paying special attention to the students' individual social needs and the academic requirements for a high school education.

In school-year 2006-2007, CIS opened its first Performance Learning Center in North Carolina.

A PLC is a small non-traditional high school model providing alternative means for a standard NC high school diploma:

- Part of the Alternative High Schools network
- Funded by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation