



Communities
In Schools®

Tennessee

ANNUAL REPORT

2023- 2024



DEAR FRIENDS,

As I reflect on my first full year as CEO of Communities In Schools of Tennessee (CISTN), I am filled with gratitude for all we accomplished together. Our mission—to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life—is now more urgent and impactful as ever.

This past year, I visited 39 of our partner schools and witnessed the incredible work of our program managers. I heard students, families, and educators share stories of transformation and saw systemic barriers addressed head-on.

Fall 2023 began with our expansion into five new schools in Nashville's Maplewood cluster. This allows us to provide continuous support and services to students throughout their entire K-12 journeys for the first time. I'm proud to report that we made an immediate impact: at each of our new schools, chronic absenteeism decreased by double digits in the first semester.

But that's not all. Our case-managed students across the state made remarkable progress last year:

- **Graduation & Grade Promotion:** 95% of our seniors graduated, and 93% of our K-11 students were promoted to the next grade.
- **Mental Wellbeing:** 71% of our students improved their mental health and wellbeing scores last year.
- **Attendance:** 70% of our case-managed students improved their attendance last year.



With the right support, students can overcome challenges and thrive, and we are grateful for the opportunity to expand our services to reach even more students and families across the state.

This fall, with support from private philanthropy and the State of Tennessee, we increased our footprint from 42 to 59 partner schools. Our expansion included new schools in Nashville, several existing rural counties, and Bedford and Putnam Counties. Over 25,000 students will benefit from the services and support of CISTN and our program managers during the 2024-25 school year.

It's an exciting time, and none of this is possible without you. To our partners, donors, volunteers, and community advocates: thank you for believing in our mission and joining us in this vital work. As we look to the future, I am more confident than ever in our ability to create lasting change for Tennessee's students.

Here's to another year of growth, impact, and empowerment.

Sincerely,

Meredith Benton, MPA
CEO, Communities In Schools of Tennessee

OUR REACH

2023-24

14

Counties

1 Urban | 13 Rural

42

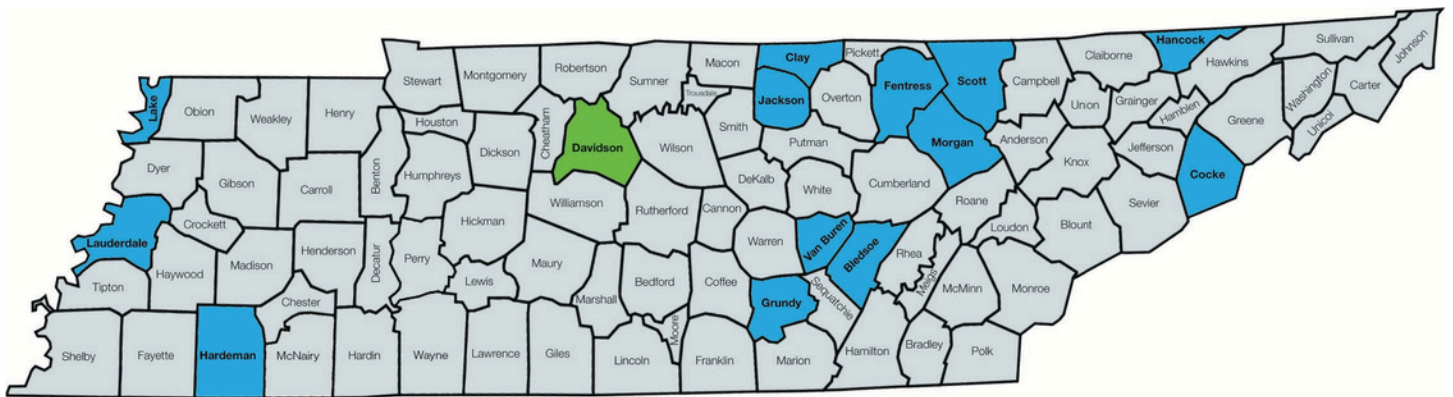
Schools

19 Urban | 23 Rural

18,438

Students

7,687 Urban | 10,751 Rural



West

Hardeman

Bolivar Central High
Bolivar Elementary
Grand Junction Elementary
Middleton High
Whiteville Elementary

Lake

Lake County High

Lauderdale

Halls High
Ripley High

Middle

Bledsoe

Bledsoe County High

Clay

Clay County High

Fentress

Clarkrange High
Alvin C. York Institute

Grundy

Grundy County High

Jackson

Jackson County High

Van Buren

Van Buren County High

Davidson

Alex Green Elementary
Amqui Elementary
Apollo Middle
Bellshire Design Center
Chadwell Elementary
Goodlettsville Middle School
Hattie Cotton Elementary
Ida B. Wells Elementary
Jere Baxter Middle
KIPP Academy Nashville
KIPP Kirkpatrick Elementary
KIPP Nashville Collegiate High
Madison Middle
Maplewood High
Paragon Mills Elementary
Shwab Elementary
Smithson Craighead Academy
Tom Joy Digital Literacy and Leadership Magnet
Warner Elementary Arts Magnet

East

Cocke

Cocke County High
Cosby High

Hancock

Hancock County High

Morgan

Wartburg Central High
Coalfield School
Oakdale School
Sunbright School

Scott

Scott High

OUR STUDENTS

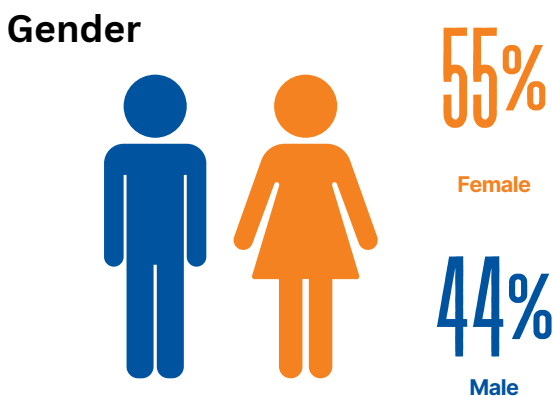
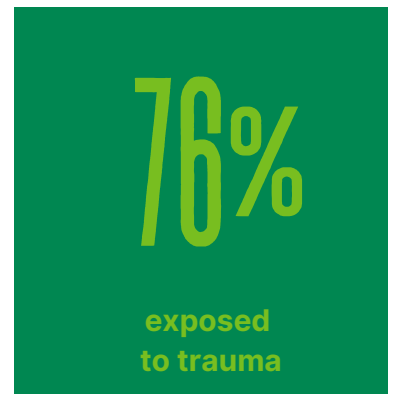
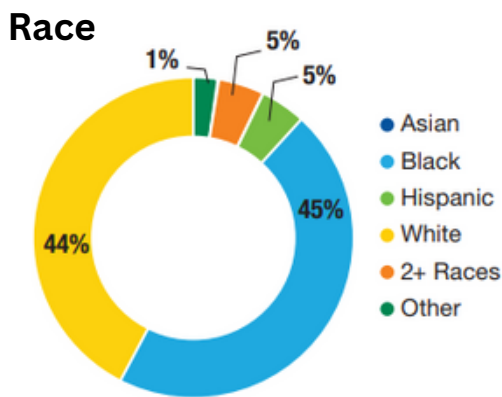
2023-24

WHO WE SERVE

At Communities In Schools of Tennessee (CISTN), we believe that every student, regardless of race, gender, ability, zip code, or socioeconomic background has what they need to realize their full potential in school and beyond. We walk by their side, in their communities, to challenge the systems and barriers that stand between them and their success in life.

OUR CASE-MANAGED STUDENTS

Last year, CISTN program managers case-managed **1,578 students** across the state. Our program managers worked with case-managed students and their families in one-on-one and small group settings to help meet their unique challenges.



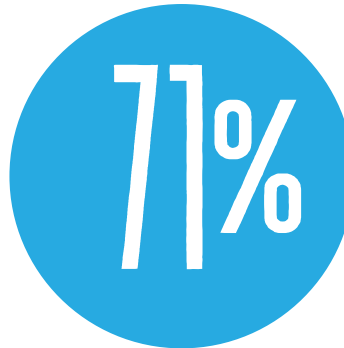
OUR RESULTS



Seniors Graduated



Improved Attendance



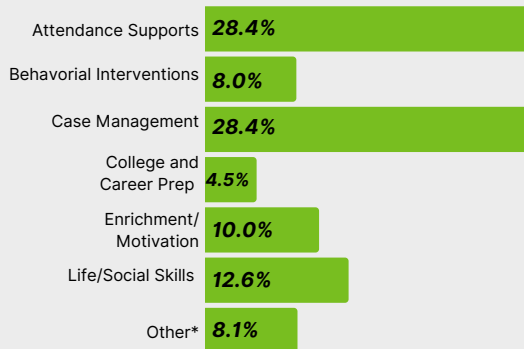
Increased mental wellbeing



Promoted to the next grade level

**Results based on the percentage of case-managed students statewide that met/made progress toward their individualized goal(s) during the 2023-24 school year.*

CISTN Service Breakdown by Time Spent



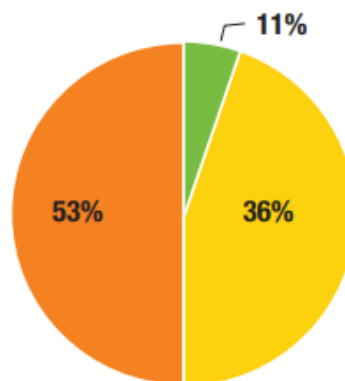
STUDENT SUPPORTS PROVIDED BY CISTN

CISTN program managers provide services tailored to meet the unique needs of the school and students they serve based on a needs assessment. All students in the school benefit from support in these areas, and case-managed students receive additional services to meet their individual needs. **27,169 total student services** were provided across the state.

*Includes academic assistance, family engagement, physical health, professional mental health.

FAMILY SUPPORTS PROVIDED BY CISTN

Our program managers work hard to address families' needs through a combination of providing direct support and connecting families to existing service providers in their community. CISTN provided **\$75,921.13** for students and families.



- Basic Needs** (\$36,561.40)
- Rent/Utility Assistance** (\$3,337.25)
- Food** (\$36,022.48)

Total Value = \$75,921.13

OUR WORK IN ACTION



Roxie Rocks Attendance

After a difficult move from Rhode Island, Roxie struggled, missing 35.5 days of school at Jackson County High School during the 2022-23 school year. “She was having some teen rebellion and not coming to school...She was very angry and didn’t seem to have any interest in much at all,” said Jennifer Fields, her CISTN program manager.

In fall 2023, Roxie enrolled in an Animal Science course and began meeting regularly with Jennifer.

“Her interest was sparked, and she has changed so much,” Jennifer observed. “Because of her love of caring for and learning about animals, she has improved her attendance and attitude about school tremendously. She has really found her passion, and it has been amazing to see.”

Roxie has also taken this interest outside of her own classes. She earned her Elanco Fundamentals of Animal Science Certification and helped lead a group of 1st-grade students around at the school’s Farm Day.

Developing her passion for animal care has also transformed her approach to school - Roxie only missed 13 days during the 2023-2024 school year. She is now determined to become a veterinarian and is excited about her future.

“I’m so proud of her and can’t wait to see the big things she does in the future,” added Jennifer.



OUR WORK IN ACTION



A Heavy Emotional Backpack

Travon's life was deeply affected when his mother, Willie Mae, was diagnosed with kidney failure. The resulting stress and uncertainty impacted his attendance at Jere Baxter Middle School, causing it to drop to about 60%. As he grappled with her illness, his academic performance and behavior suffered, too.

"When he was here, you could tell his mind was just somewhere else," said his CISTN program manager, Ms. Fletcher. "Kids have physical backpacks, but they also have emotional backpacks, and the heavier that emotional backpack gets, they're not able to then sit in class and learn."

CISTN and Ms. Fletcher stepped in to provide crucial academic support and emotional guidance. "When I need somebody to talk to, I can talk to Ms. Fletcher," Travon said. "She let me call my mama twice a day when she was in the hospital. That made me feel better."

Willie Mae received a kidney transplant over the summer. With his mother's health improving, Travon's school attendance rose to nearly 80%, and his grades and overall well-being followed suit. He is more confident, empathetic, and engaged with his peers and studies.

CISTN was able to show up for Travon and Willie Mae - and has made a difference at the entire school, too. "CIS is a non-negotiable program here at Jere Baxter," said principal Dr. Kisha Cox. "With that partnership, we have observed positive shifts in every area of our school, an increase in our achievement data, a decrease in scholars who are chronically absent, and an increase in scholars who are attending school daily."



OUR WORK IN ACTION

Helping Eddie Stay on Track

Eddie was a hardworking senior at Bledsoe County High School with a part-time job. On track to graduate in December 2023, his grades and attendance began to slip once he became a father to a child with medical needs due to late-night feedings, hospitalizations, doctor appointments, and lack of sleep.

His CISTN program manager, Kesha Webb, worked with school officials to give Eddie more time to make up assignments every day in her office during 6th period. This support proved critical; not only was he able to catch up and pass his classes, Eddie was able to graduate early and is excited to start his next journey at Chattanooga State Community College, where he is studying to be an EMT.



Turning on a Light Switch

Monique, the CISTN program manager at Ida B. Wells, started having lunch with Sherry after her mother reached out to CISTN because she and her older brother needed a backpack, clothes, and other basic needs. At first, Sherry wouldn't talk to Monique as much as the other kids, only getting shy smiles. However, Monique continued to engage with her during their lunches. Despite Sherry's initial reserve, building a relationship with a trusted adult sparked a remarkable transformation. "It was like watching someone turn on a light switch," Monique said. Suddenly, she was engaging more openly, talkative, and eagerly awaiting their next meeting.

As Sherry blossomed under CISTN's support, her family encountered new challenges: both parents became unemployed, and a new baby boy was born. Responding to the family's urgent request for school supplies and baby formula, Monique and CISTN acted swiftly. Their crucial support went beyond meeting Sherry's needs—it extended to her entire family, demonstrating Monique's critical role as a CISTN program manager in providing stability and support to school families in times of need.



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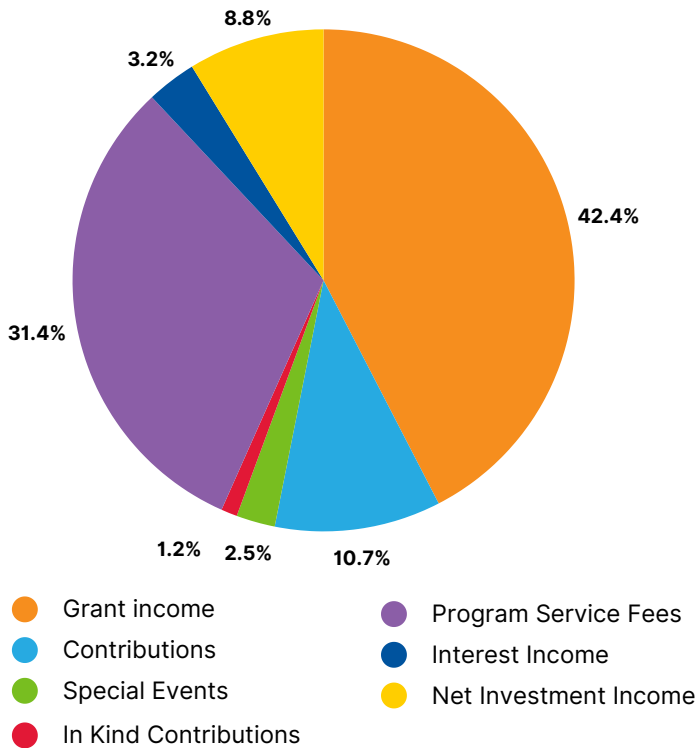


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024

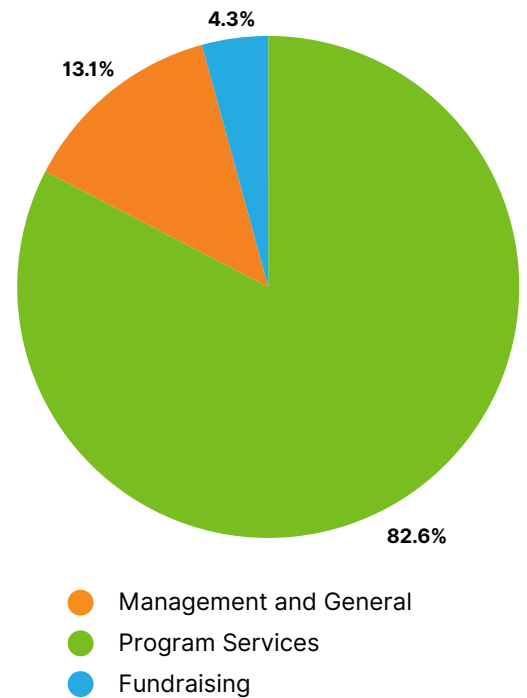
Revenues*

\$3,451,744



Expenses

\$4,543,859



*In July 2022, the Organization received \$3,000,000 from the State of Tennessee related to a 2-year pilot program to continue the program into 23 high schools in 15 of the most economically distressed rural counties in the state. The funds were restricted solely for this purpose. For FY24 Board approved budget, half of the \$3,000,000- or \$1,500,000- was budgeted for planning purposes and during fiscal year 2024 that same amount of funds was released from restriction.



2023-24 DONORS

FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS

Special thanks to the following foundations and corporations that gave at or above \$5,000 for their financial support.



INDIVIDUALS

Special thanks to the following individuals that gave at or above \$1,000 for their financial support.

Lindsay & Lee Ballew
Cyrus Bahrassa
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Barry & Michelle Vandevier



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THANK YOU
FOR BEING
ALL IN
FOR KIDS