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Contact: Hadley Moore Vlahogeorge, Executive Director, CIS of Indiana
hadleym@cisindiana.org
317-423-8200- Office
317-961-0193- Google Voice

Communities In Schools of Indiana Announces Transformative Investment to Help Students Overcome Obstacles to Learning

\$133.5 Million Donation from Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott Will Deepen Organization's Impact in 3,000 Schools Across the Country

February 3, 2022 - Communities In Schools of Indiana, the local affiliate of the national organization working to ensure every student, regardless of race, zip code, or history of marginalization has what they need to succeed in school and beyond, today announced it is part of a unprecedented gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott to the Communities In Schools Network and National Office. Ms. Scott's gift of \$800,000 to CIS of Indiana is the largest gift CIS of Indiana has ever received, and it will enable the organization to expand its impact in more schools struggling to fund the increasing needs of Hoosier children.

In a time when the global pandemic has created unparalleled challenges for students and families, including experiences of social isolation, economic crisis, stress, and trauma, this investment will help CIS of Indiana to carry out its cause to build sustainable systems of support for the students and families that would otherwise be left behind. An investment in CIS to use its model and evidence base to help students overcome obstacles to learning is tremendous fuel for impact, infrastructure, and the people working inside schools. However, it does not change the reality of the continued work ahead, and the public and private partnership that must remain true.

"As a former school leader, I know firsthand the impact a caring adult can have on the life of a child. The role CIS of Indiana serves in our school buildings and their surrounding communities is invaluable," said **Hadley Moore Vlahogeorge, Executive Director of CIS of Indiana**, which currently serves over 26,000 students in 31 schools in Central Indiana. Indianapolis school districts employing the CIS model include the Metropolitan School Districts of Lawrence and Decatur Townships and the Indianapolis Public Schools, and other sites are operating in Bloomington, Lafayette, and Randolph County. There are two additional CIS affiliates serving even more Hoosier students in Lake and Wayne counties.

For nearly a decade, thanks to the championship of statewide expansion by the late Senator Richard Lugar, Communities in Schools of Indiana has demonstrated measurable success in student outcomes. In the 2020-2021 school year, 100% percent of K-11 students were promoted to the next grade, and 97% percent of seniors graduated or received a GED. In the 2021-2022 school year, CIS of Indiana has increased its impact from 26 schools to the current 31, and the organization is hopeful this gift will afford more districts the opportunity to partner with CIS and bring much-needed attention to the urgent challenges of our school communities. Demand is high for intensive student supports, and it will take investments from multiple sectors to support Indiana's children and adolescents, culminating in a healthier state that can remain an economic competitor. The Communities in Schools evidence-based model adapts to serve students grades K-12 in a variety of school settings- urban, rural, and suburban- unlike competitors who focus on the lower grades in cities with abundant resources and funding.

Dr. Suellen Reed, Indiana's Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1993-2009 and Secretary of CIS of Indiana's Board of Directors shared that "CIS works in Indiana, and we have the data to show that the program really makes a difference. The support keeps students in school and on the road to be successful citizens. I am proud to serve with the distinguished members of the state board of CIS. The proven record of success in public schools inspires us to continue to seek the means to keep successful programs going where they have been implemented and to make services available to meet the needs of students throughout our state. Today's announcement indicates confidence in our work and a significant investment in its continuance."

CIS believes that transformative relationships are key to unlocking a student's potential. Our school-based staff works inside schools in partnership with teachers and parents to help address the non-academic needs of students. CIS coordinates with schools and local service providers to meet the needs of students and families, as well as providing critical resources, like food, housing, healthcare, counseling, access to remote technology, and more so that students (and educators) can focus on academics. By identifying the points of challenge for students in their personal lives, CIS staff helps to empower students to move beyond the barriers they face in the school building and in the community.

"Today is an important day for students who are underserved, under-resourced, and in need of supports to build a brighter future," said **Rey Saldaña, President and CEO of Communities In Schools**. "This unrestricted gift allows us to combat the inequities in public education and reimagine the way schools operate and show up for all students. Our National goal is to bring our model inside of every one of the 70,000 Title I-eligible schools in the country; currently, we operate in 3,000 schools – so we still have a long way to go, and we will need ongoing support to get there."

About Communities in Schools

Communities In Schools® (CIS™) is a national organization that ensures every student, regardless of race, zip code, or socioeconomic background, has what they need to realize their potential in school and beyond. Working directly inside 3,000 schools across the country, we connect students to caring adults and community resources that help them see, confront, and overcome the barriers that stand between them and a brighter future. Together, we build a powerful change movement made up of peers, students, and alumni committed to building an equitable path to education for future generations. <https://cisindiana.org/>