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Communities In Schools of Delaware Receives \$694,400 Aspire Contribution from AT&T

Contribution to support growth of program in Delaware, help Delaware students succeed

Dover, Del., October 23, 2014 – Communities In Schools of Delaware (CISDE) – part of the nation’s largest and most effective organization dedicated to keeping kids in school and helping them succeed in life – today announced a \$694,400 AT&T Aspire contribution that will enable the organization to expand its integrated student services model to more schools in Delaware.

The program expansion was highlighted during a special event in Dover, featuring Gov. Jack Markell, as well as state and local government, education and civic leaders from the across the state. J. Michael Schweder, president, AT&T-Mid Atlantic represented the company.

CISDE is one 30 recipients nationwide that received \$12.5 million from AT&T as part of AT&T Aspire, the company’s signature education initiative focused on school success and career readiness. With an unwavering commitment to data-driven education outcomes, AT&T Aspire has impacted more than one million students since its launch in 2008.

“Common sense and extensive research tell us hungry students can’t learn, scared children can’t focus, and bored kids don’t thrive. We need to put students and their families at the center of our efforts and align the resources we have with their individualized needs,” said Jim Purcell, president, Communities In Schools of Delaware. “The inclusion of parents and support from the community, including mentoring, health, safety programs, needs and resources, raises the achievement level and success of the student. This expansion demonstrates our commitment to give more young people the resources they need to succeed in school.”

Gov. Markell, who recently was named to serve on the National Governors Association (NGA) Education and Workforce Committee, said CISDE is doing extraordinary work to help the First State’s students excel.

“The future competitiveness and economic prosperity of our state and country are dependent upon having a skilled workforce with the education and training to thrive in the new economy,” Markell said. “Technology companies like AT&T and others need a pipeline of workers who are equipped with the skills and experiences that are essential for success. AT&T’s contribution to CISDE is great news for our students and our state.”

Through a competitive request for proposal process, 30 schools, school districts and non-profits, including Communities In Schools of Delaware, were selected from more than 1,100 nationwide. Programs were evaluated based on their effectiveness in helping students graduate, better prepared for a meaningful career or college. Selected programs use evidence-based approaches to serve students and are able to demonstrate quantitative results.

“Education has been a priority for AT&T for more than a century. We believe that when we invest in education, we are making our communities stronger, safer and more economically viable,” said Schweder. “This was an intensely competitive application process. Communities In Schools Delaware had a strong application and a strong record of success. We are thrilled to help them help more students prepare for college and careers.”

Schweder added that CISDE has received more than \$1 million in Aspire contributions since the initiative was launched. In 2010, AT&T announced a \$104,000 contribution to CISDE. In November 2012, Schweder visited William Penn High School to announce a \$300,000 contribution to the organization. Today’s announcement builds on CISDE’s record of success.

About CISDE’s Program

One-to-one mentoring, a cornerstone of Communities In Schools, instills confidence to succeed and the belief that education creates opportunity. These programs help students set high expectations for success.

A component of AT&T’s collaboration with Communities In Schools supports student mentoring. Research has shown that a caring adult in a young person's life impacts their success. According to a [recent report](#), students with mentors are more likely to aspire to enroll and graduate from college than those without mentors (76 percent vs. 56 percent).

The AT&T contribution increases CISDE staff, opens access to service partners, and provides evidenced-based programming for six Delaware High Schools: Al duPont High School, Dover High School, John Dickinson High School, Milford High School, Thomas McKean High School and Woodbridge High School. Students in these schools will benefit from the support of trained site coordinators working inside those schools. Over 400 students will receive intensive, strategic intervention services and will be monitored for progress over the next two years.

AT&T Aspire funding recipients include non-profits, schools and school districts around the country that will expand programs to serve additional students; add components to strengthen the program; or to replicate in new locations. Many of the awardees deliver integrated student supports, focus on college or career preparation, and/or provide mentoring or peer-to-peer supports to help students succeed academically.

CISDE's approach to communities is the same – different communities have different needs and priorities. The organization assesses needs and coordinates with service providers to provide the following services:

- **Non-academic assistance:** Connecting young people with a host of services — healthcare, housing, safety, nutrition — resulting in students more prepared to learn.
- **One-to-one mentoring:** Instilling the confidence to succeed, the belief that education creates opportunity, and setting the expectation for success.
- **Tutoring and academic support:** Increasing academic performance and building confidence.
- **Family assistance & parent engagement:** Ensuring children have a supportive home life, and that parents have access to the services they need.
- **Out-of-school enrichment & service learning:** Strengthening the resiliency of children to succeed by expanding their understanding of what the world has to offer.
- **College and work access and readiness:** Addressing college readiness earlier in school, to better prepare students to take advantage of going to college and increase employability.

Over the past three years, CISDE has helped to reduce the dropout rate and increase the graduation rate for some of the most at risk students at Dover High School, Thomas McKean High School and William Penn High School.

While over 60 percent of the students in each of these schools have been identified as having more than five risk factors for dropping out of school, 100 percent of CIS students from William Penn and Thomas McKean not only graduated from their schools, but did so with the same cohort of students with whom they started. Between 79-88 percent of those same students went on to postsecondary opportunities last year. In 2013-14, CIS students' dropout rates were less than .3 percent in all CISDE schools.

About Philanthropy at AT&T

AT&T Inc. is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its community initiatives, AT&T has a long history of investing in projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; or address community needs. In 2013, more than \$130 million was contributed or directed through corporate-, employee-, social investment- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs. AT&T Aspire is AT&T's signature education initiative that drives innovation in education by bringing diverse resources to bear on the issue including funding, technology, employee volunteerism, and mentoring.

About Communities In Schools

Communities In Schools of Delaware is part of the national Communities In Schools' network which operates in more than 2,200 schools in the most challenged communities of 26 states and the District of Columbia. Working closely with school districts and partner organizations, Communities In Schools serves 1.3 million young people and their families each year. Based directly inside schools throughout the country, Communities In Schools connects students and their families to basic and critical educational and community-based resources, tailored to each student's specific needs. Learn more about Communities In Schools of Delaware at www.cisdela.org.