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**Communities in Schools of Northwest Michigan
Receives Grants to Expand and Scale in Area Schools**

Mancelona, MI - April XX, 2024 - Communities in Schools of Northwest Michigan (CISNWMI), a regional affiliate of Communities in Schools, in partnership with local school districts, received two grants that are hoped to accelerate student achievement throughout the region.

Currently serving over 1,700 students in Northwest Michigan school districts, CISNWMI helps K-12 pupils remove obstacles to achievement by providing them with the resources and the community of support to thrive.

Local school districts are receiving over \$275,000 grant awards by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to partner with Communities In Schools of Northwest Michigan. The grant program aligns with the State of Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan's target goals. CISNWMI's impact as a nonprofit partner is anticipated to improve early literacy achievement and increase the percentage of all students who graduate from high school.

CIS' proven model kickstarts achievement by placing full-time, school-based site coordinators in the districts they support.

"A collaborative approach helps students see past their challenges and stay focused on their aspirations," shared Amy Burk, Executive Director of CISNWMI. "Working together with teachers and administrators, our site coordinators supply children with the tools they need to be healthy, safe, and ready to learn."

MDE grant funding will help the organization expand student supports in Kalkaska, East Jordan, Mancelona, and Ellsworth Community Schools, reaching an estimated 75% of the student population.

Additionally, CISNWMI received a Scaling Grant of over \$400,000 from Communities In Schools National, which will bring its integrated student supports model to the Central Lake and Vanderbilt school districts, as well as deepen the work in East Jordan Elementary School. This award was made possible through a nationwide \$165 million Ballmer investment designed to catalyze local public and private investment sources through a 1:1 match requirement over the first three years and commitments to sustain the work long-term. These funds, combined with funding from the MDE grant, make the expansion into Central Lake and Vanderbilt possible.

David Harwood, Superintendent of Vanderbilt Area School District, expressed enthusiasm for the partnership ahead. "I'm thrilled about the partnership between our district and CIS. With CIS's proven track record in empowering students to stay in school and achieve in life, I am confident that our collaboration will lead to improved outcomes."

Expanded supports and resources will roll out to new and existing partner schools at the start of the 2024-2025 academic year.

About Communities in Schools of Northwest Michigan

Communities In Schools® (CIS®) is a national organization that ensures every student, regardless of who they are, their ability, zip code, or socioeconomic background, has what they need to realize their potential in school and beyond. Working in several school districts in Northwest Michigan, we connect over 1,700 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. Explore our impact at [cisnwmi.org](https://www.cisnwmi.org).