



2024-25

QUARTER 2 REPORT

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024



Communities
In Schools®

Memphis

FROM OUR CEO *Teshanda Middleton*



As I reflect on the second quarter of the 2024-25 school year, I am filled with gratitude and deep appreciation for the incredible work of our team, partners, and supporters who make our mission a reality.

Every day, we prove what's possible when we commit to data-driven impact, intentional collaboration, and an unwavering belief in our students' potential. This quarter, we doubled down on our efforts—not only to provide critical support to students and families but to ensure that our strategies are shaped by meaningful data that drives real, lasting change.

One of our top priorities this year has been strengthening how we collect, analyze, and apply data to improve student outcomes. Under the leadership of Kathedra Burton, our Director of Analytics & Data Management, we have introduced structured coaching, standardized progress monitoring, and innovative tools that empower our program managers and specialists to make informed, results-based decisions. With new strategies like the Reset Strategy for Integrated Student Supports and a refined approach to program fidelity, we are ensuring consistency, quality, and accountability in every school we serve. Our goal is clear: to use data not just to track progress, but to shape it.

This commitment to impact is reflected in every aspect of our work. This quarter, we expanded into 10 new schools, increasing our reach and deepening our relationships with students, families, and educators across Memphis. Our engagement in national events like the CUBE Conference and the Community School Fundamentals Conference reinforced our dedication to equity and innovation, helping us refine our student-centered approach. Meanwhile, our partnership with The Greater Memphis Chamber is opening new doors for justice-involved students, equipping them with the skills and opportunities they need to build stronger futures.



We also took time to celebrate a major milestone—10 years of Communities In Schools of Memphis!

Our anniversary event at Topgolf was an evening of gratitude, connection, and renewed purpose, bringing together business leaders, community partners, and supporters who share our vision for transforming communities for youth and families in Memphis. And, of course, the holiday season was made even more special through initiatives like our Care Coordination Parent Holiday Luncheon and the fourth annual Angel Tree celebration, where we provided gifts, meals, and moments of joy to students and families.

As we look ahead, our mission remains clear: to break down barriers and create meaningful opportunities for every student we serve. On the next page, you'll hear from Kathedra Burton, who shares more about how we are using data and analytics to strengthen our programs, refine our approach, and drive lasting change.

***Thank you for being a part of this journey—
we couldn't do this work without you!***

- Teshanda



Strengthening Communities

ONE DATA POINT AT A TIME

At Communities In Schools of Memphis (CISM), data is more than just numbers—it's the foundation of how we drive impact, set goals, and create meaningful change for students, families, and school communities. As we navigate the 2024-25 school year, our focus on data and analytics has never been more critical. By strengthening our processes and deepening our impact, we're helping ensure that every student receives the tailored support they need to thrive.

A results-based approach requires structure, clarity, and consistency. To support our new Integrated Student Supports (ISS) Program Managers (PMs), we launched the Reset Strategy—a set of initiatives designed to streamline workflows and enhance coaching.

We also introduced a PM Handbook for training and guidance, one-on-one data coaching, and progress monitoring templates that provide a clear snapshot of student progress. Additionally, automated data downloads give our team real-time access to updated information so that decision-making is always based on the latest insights.

As our team grows, maintaining program fidelity is paramount. We've implemented a Support Rubric to standardize intervention plans across schools and introduced guiding documents for principal meetings and coaching sessions. Our Goal-Oriented Planning model ensures that Tier 1 initiatives are intentionally structured, while the adoption of national social emotional learning (SEL) assessment tools guarantees consistent and reliable evaluations of student well-being for all grade levels.

Change can be challenging, but clear communication and structured support make all the difference. Our WOW (Weekly Operations Work) meetings have been repurposed for skill-building and strategic planning. We provide structured training sessions and coaching, offer two-week lead times on progress monitoring templates, and refine our processes continuously based on team feedback. Transparency and accountability are fixtures at the heart of our work, ensuring that expectations are clear and manageable.

Data is only as powerful as the conversations it inspires. By encouraging open dialogue, we foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Our principal meetings now incorporate structured feedback loops, and specialists have quarterly access to data, empowering them to take ownership of their reports. An open-door policy allows challenges and concerns to be addressed proactively, and feedback is directly incorporated into training and process development.

The need for data-driven decision-making in education is undeniable. Nationally, schools that leverage data effectively see improved student outcomes, with research showing that data-driven instruction can increase student achievement by up to 20% (Hanover Research, 2023). Locally, Memphis schools serving under-resourced communities rely on precise, actionable insights to close achievement gaps and provide equitable support.

At CISM, we know that data tells a story—but it's up to us to use it effectively. By embedding analytics into every facet of our work, our impact is not only measurable but it also becomes deeply meaningful. As we move forward, our commitment remains the same: to empower students, support families, and build stronger communities—one data point at a time.



Kathedra Burton
Director of Analytics & Data Management



DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISES



ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

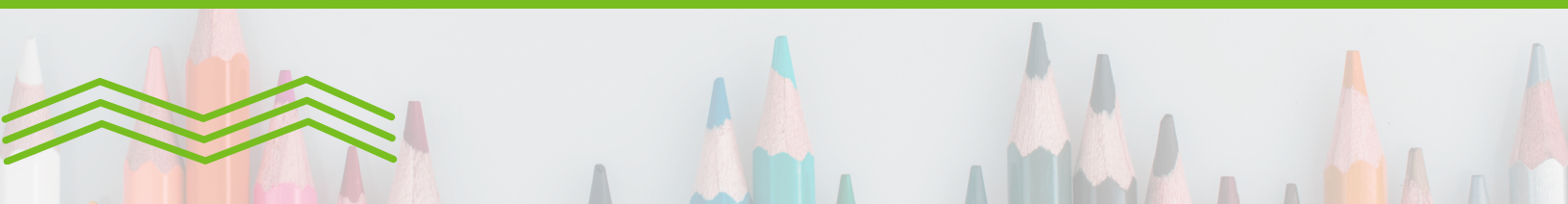
- **Elevating Equity at the CUBE Conference** – Our CEO represented CISM at the 2024 Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) conference, joining national education leaders to discuss strategies for advancing equity in urban schools. Key topics included policy-driven solutions for safe, inclusive learning environments and the power of community partnerships in addressing systemic inequities. Board Chair Chas Harris of HES Facilities Management reinforced our commitment to student success by sharing insights on creating clean, healthy schools that support learning. This event strengthened our resolve to provide holistic, hands-on support that ensures every student has the opportunity to thrive.
- **Shaping Future Leaders at Christian Brothers University** – Our CEO served as a guest speaker at CBU, leading an interactive session on "Visionary Leadership: Leading Authentically Without Limits." Through the "Privilege for Sale" activity, participants explored personal experiences with privilege and inequity, setting the stage for meaningful discussions on leadership and systemic change. The session emphasized self-reflection, purpose-driven leadership, and the power of personal storytelling in advancing equity. Participants left with their own "story of self," connecting their experiences to their future impact as educators and leaders.



PREPARE MORE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

Integrated Student Support (ISS)

- **Expanded Reach with 10 New School Partners** – Welcomed the following schools into the CISM network, increasing access to integrated student support:
 - Perea Elementary School
 - Promise Academy Springhill
 - Promise Academy Hollywood
 - Memphis Business Academy Middle School
 - Power Center Academy Hickory Hill Elementary, Middle & High Schools
 - Power Center Academy Southeast Elementary & Middle Schools
 - Memphis Grizzlies Prep
- **Community School Fundamentals Conference** – ISS team members attended the conference in New York to explore evolving community school models.
 - Key Takeaways: The community school model is a strategy, not just a program—schools must leverage their unique assets, needs, and resources to drive success. The model is shifting from a rigid, four-pillar framework to a flexible, "puzzle-like" approach that prioritizes student success and whole-school impact.





PREPARE MORE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE - Cont.

College & Career Readiness (CCR)

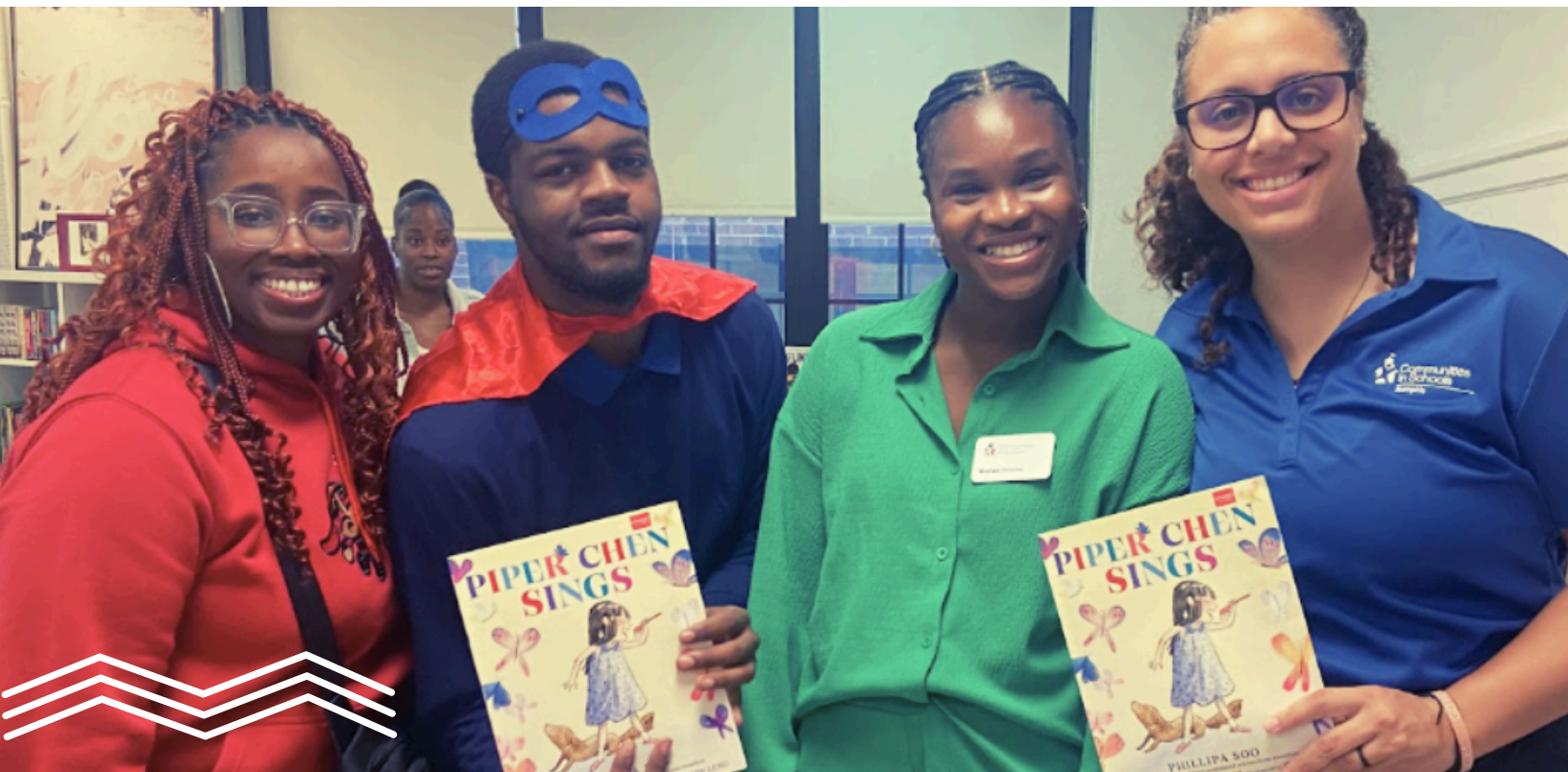
- **Empowering Justice-Involved Youth** – In partnership with The Greater Memphis Chamber, CCR will support 15-25 justice-involved students (ages 16-19) in career exploration and skill development. Through Greater MEMpowerment, participants will engage in job training, internships, and wrap-around support to become work-ready by February 2025.
- **University of Mississippi Campus Visit** – Four students toured Ole Miss, gaining insight into campus life, student engagement, career preparation, tuition, and special scholarships available for Greater Memphis students.
- **Career Exploration Week (CEW)** – During Fall Break, CISM hosted a dynamic week of career-focused programming for students, families, alumni, and staff. Participants engaged with industry professionals, explored high-demand career fields, and developed essential skills for future success. The week featured a virtual Employability Skills 101 session on job search strategies and résumé writing, a virtual career fair with industry professionals, an in-person personal statement workshop led by CISM Chief of Staff & Strategy Jessica Pontoo, and a steel warehouse tour offering insight into high-paying manufacturing career.

Care Coordination

- **Parent Workshop on Self-Sufficiency** – Led by Dr. Rochelle Atkins, this session helped parents recognize the power of learned optimism, equipping them with tools to shift their mindset, set SMART goals, and take proactive steps toward self-sufficiency. Participants left motivated and ready to implement strategies for personal and family growth.
- **Care Coordination Parent Holiday Luncheon** – A festive celebration honoring parents' progress, featuring a warm meal from Piccadilly, thoughtful holiday gifts, and an engaging mental health discussion with Dr. DeBerry of Indomitable Families Affected by Incarceration. Families enjoyed games, holiday photos, and meaningful time together in a joyful, uplifting atmosphere.



DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISES



BUILD A VIBRANT CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY

Collective Impact

- **Top Golf Anniversary Event** – On November 18, CIS of Memphis celebrated 10 years of impact with an exclusive evening at Top Golf. Community and business leaders joined select staff to strengthen partnerships, reflect on a decade of student success, and discuss the future of education in Memphis. The event honored our supporters and set the stage for deeper collaboration.
- **Staff Winter Celebration** – To close out the year, CIS of Memphis hosted a festive gathering at East End Skating for staff, families, and friends. The evening featured skating, gingerbread house decorating, and cookie decorating, fostering camaraderie and celebrating our collective impact as we stepped into the new year with renewed energy.
- **Angel Tree Initiative** – CIS of Memphis ensured every student identified by our specialists received holiday gifts, thanks to the generosity of staff, board members, and community partners. A gift-wrapping event brought our team together to prepare presents, while a festive celebration at The Links in Whitehaven spread holiday cheer with music, games, and lasting memories for families.
- **Homeless to Hopeful (H2H)** – During National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, CIS of Memphis hosted H2H to provide critical resources to individuals experiencing homelessness. The event distributed hot meals, hygiene products, winter essentials, and health supplies while fostering community connections. With support from partners like Methodist LeBonheur, Catholic Charities, and Hospitality Hub, H2H made a meaningful impact through direct aid and volunteer efforts.



BUILD A VIBRANT CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY - Cont.

Operations & Finance

- **Financial Reports** – CISM’s 2023-2024 annual 990, audit, and single audit were successfully completed and board approved.
- **Accreditation** – CISM received renewal of full accreditation from the National Office for the next two years.
- **Youth Grant** – CISM secured \$500,000 in private grant funding to support youth smoking cessation initiatives and deepen programmatic efforts across all areas.
- **Leadership Appointment** – Chief Operations & Finance Officer Kelsey Hardy was appointed to the Greater Memphis Chamber’s Young Professionals Advisory Council.

Alumni Engagement

- **CIS National Alumni Advisory Group** – CISM alumni and Alumni Ambassador Kai Green joined the CIS National Alumni Advisory Group, where alumni from across the national affiliates collaborate to strengthen engagement, provide program insights, and support personal and professional growth while building lasting connections within the CIS community.
- **National Alumni Planning Retreat** – From November 21-24, Kai Green and JaMeko Williams, Director of Workforce Development & Alumni Relations, attended the CIS National Alumni Planning Retreat in Washington, D.C., to advance alumni engagement strategies.
- **Headshots & Handshakes** – This signature networking event connected professionals from top businesses with emerging talent for an evening of career development. Attendees gained industry insights, expanded their networks, and received expert interview tips. A professional photographer provided high-quality headshots, ensuring participants left with a polished, updated professional image.



CISM BY THE NUMBERS

The fourth annual CIS of Memphis Angel Tree event brought holiday joy to students and families by ensuring every child identified by our specialists received gifts for the season. Through the generosity of staff, board members, and community partners, all 185 students were sponsored or provided for. The event fostered a sense of community, with volunteers wrapping gifts, transporting them for distribution, and celebrating with families at The Links at Whitehaven. The evening was filled with food, games, raffles, and dancing—creating a festive and memorable experience for all.

Angel Tree 2024



**185 STUDENT
ANGELS RECEIVED
HOLIDAY GIFTS**



**62 STUDENTS
SPONSORED BY
STAFF, BOARD &
PARTNERS**



**\$2,000+ IN GIFT
DONATIONS FROM
SPONSORS**



**65 FAMILIES IN
ATTENDANCE**



Q2 PROGRESS SNAPSHOT



Integrated School Supports (ISS)

- 63% of Partner Schools Improved Daily Attendance
- 72% of All Students Improved Daily Attendance
- 67% of Case-Managed Students Improved Grades in One or More Core Subjects
- 100% of Students Increased College Readiness
- 100% of Students Reduced High-Risk Behaviors (i.e. tobacco, bullying, conduct, etc.)
- 89% of Students had Fewer Disciplinary Actions (i.e. referrals, suspensions, detentions, other negative interactions, etc.)
- 65% of Students Improved Social Emotional Intelligence (i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, decision-making, etc.)

College & Career Readiness Goals

- 83 - CCR Enrollments
- \$44,000+ - Student Wages Earned (Q2)
- \$233,000+ - Funding Support for CCR Students
- \$8,500+ - Incentives for Student Goals

Care Coordination

- 202 - Total Families Currently Enrolled
- 103 - New Families Enrolled
- 300+ Referrals for Family Services/Resources
- \$75,000+ in Direct Support to Families
- Over 50% of Families Achieved or Making Progress Toward Goals
- Nearly 60 Families Received Assistance to Recover From or Avoid Housing Crises

Alumni Network

- 27 - Engaged in Alumni Programming
- 7 - New Alumni Network Members
- 11 Hours Toward Building Alumni Leadership Community
- 23.5 Hours of Career & Professional Development
- 6 Hours of Life Skills
- 11 Hours of Post-secondary Support





Success Story _____ **Making the Difference for a Family**

By Jessica Coley, Student Support Specialist

Sometimes, a small barrier can stand in the way of a child's success—and sometimes, that barrier is bigger than it seems. I recently worked with a mother of two children struggling with school attendance. Their frequent absences weren't due to a lack of effort but rather a series of challenges that made learning feel impossible. Their mother was desperate to help but didn't know where to turn.

Through our conversations, I learned the root of their struggles: severe dental pain. Their toothaches made it hard to concentrate in class, and their discomfort kept them from wanting to go to school at all. I connected the family with dental care resources, ensuring all three children received the treatment they needed. Almost immediately, the difference was clear. With their pain relieved, they were ready to return to school.

But the challenges didn't stop there. The mother was also struggling to find a doctor who would accept her insurance so her daughters could receive necessary medication. Without it, their behaviors were affecting both their learning and their relationships with peers. I worked to connect them with a provider, ensuring they received the care they needed to stay focused and engaged.

The family also received extra support through our Angel Tree event, providing them with holiday gifts and easing some financial burdens. With these critical supports in place, the transformation was remarkable: the children haven't missed a single day of school since. They are healthier, happier, and fully engaged in their education.

But just as important as the resources was the shift in understanding. Initially, some teachers were frustrated with the children's behaviors, unaware of the struggles they were facing. By advocating for the students and explaining their situation, I helped build empathy and support within the school community. Now, their teachers recognize the importance of asking for help and see my role as a resource for student success.

This story is a testament to what happens when barriers are removed, families are supported, and schools work together to uplift every child. With the right help, these students didn't just return to school—they're thriving.



Success Story

An Unforgettable Day of Connection & Support

By Teresa McClatchey, Youth Homeless Systems Navigator

During National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, CISM hosted its 2nd annual “Homeless to Hopeful” (H2H) outreach event, offering more than just resources—it was a day of connection, support, and hope for individuals experiencing homelessness.



Around 150 people joined us for a day filled with warmth and empowerment. The simple act of being welcomed with care immediately lifted spirits. A powerful moment occurred when a man tried on a new pair of winter shoes and said, “I never thought I’d have shoes like this again.” This small gesture spoke volumes about the importance of dignity and respect.

In addition to shoes, we provided winter accessories, hot meals, and personal hygiene products. The meal was more than just nourishment; it created a sense of community where everyone felt valued. We also provided health resources, including condoms and Plan B, empowering individuals to take control of their well-being.

A special part of the day was seeing people connect with service providers and each other. H2H not only offered physical items but also created a space where participants could learn about available resources and build a sense of belonging. It was a powerful reminder that homelessness doesn’t have to be an isolating experience.

At the heart of the event was a commitment to raise awareness and reduce stigma surrounding homelessness. By the end of the day, participants left with renewed hope, knowing they were seen, heard, and supported. The event demonstrated the power of community and connection, showing that everyone has the potential to help others move forward with dignity and hope.



Success Story

From Need to Collaborative Action

By Jade Johnson, Student Support Specialist

At Memphis Business Academy (MBA) High School, a simple observation sparked a powerful initiative. Joyclyn Wilson, the school's Culture Leader, noticed that several students lacked coats as the colder months approached. Her advocacy set in motion a collaborative effort that would ensure no child at MBA High, MBA Middle, and Westside Middle Schools faced the winter unprepared.

Legacy of Legends, a community organization dedicated to empowering underserved communities, stepped up to lead a coat drive. In partnership with Communities In Schools of Memphis (CISM), the initiative identified and provided coats to over 70 students, with additional coats available for any students whose needs arose unexpectedly.

Student support specialists Jade Johnson (MBAH), QuaDaesia Allen (MBAM), and Ebony Campbell (WMS) were integral to the success of the initiative. They worked diligently to identify students in need and ensured smooth distribution, exemplifying our #AllInForKids commitment.

Despite challenges such as the initial underestimation of need and logistical hurdles, the initiative was a success due to strong collaboration and clear communication. This effort not only met immediate needs but also demonstrated the power of partnerships and community-driven solutions.

The coat drive is a testament to the collective impact we can have when we work together to support students. It highlights the importance of fostering a culture of care and resilience in our schools, ultimately supporting a holistic model that empowers students to excel.



Success Story

A Holiday Miracle for a Family in Need

By Lakesha Carver, Student Support Specialist

On December 12, 2024, I had the honor of supporting a single mother of six children in one of the most heartwarming experiences of my career. This family was struggling to make ends meet, and with winter's cold snap approaching, their need for shoes became urgent. Each child was in desperate need of footwear to stay warm, yet this mother was uncertain how she would be able to provide such a basic necessity.

I knew I couldn't just stand by. I personally took the time to ensure each child received a pair of shoes that fit properly, were warm enough for the winter, and—most importantly—made them feel special. As I handed over each pair, I saw the children's faces light up with pure joy. Their newfound confidence, reflected in the way they walked proudly in their new shoes, was a sight that I will never forget.

But it didn't stop there. Seeing the relief in the mother's eyes as I provided additional essentials—coats donated by a kind parent, socks, underwear, uniform shirts, and personal hygiene products—was deeply moving. The support I offered her that day went far beyond shoes; it was a reminder that even the simplest gestures can bring immense comfort and hope.

Tears welled up in the mother's eyes as she looked at me and said, "This is a Christmas miracle." She explained that in the past, promises of help had often fallen through, and she had lost faith that anyone would show up when she needed it most. But in that moment, she realized that there are people who genuinely care and that her family was not alone.

It's in moments like this that the true power of our work at Communities In Schools shines through. We don't just provide academic support; we offer a lifeline to families, giving them the essentials they need to survive and thrive. It's these acts of care and kindness that create a foundation of trust and hope for a brighter future.

The joy of making a tangible difference in someone's life fills me with a sense of pride that cannot be measured. This is the essence of my role as a Student Support Specialist—to support, uplift, and empower families in the most meaningful ways. It's these moments that reaffirm my belief in the work we do and the impact we have on the lives we touch.

>> Integrated Student Support (ISS):

- Our Student Support Specialists will attend a REACH 180 meeting focused on tackling chronic absenteeism and truancy. This collaborative initiative will provide schools with tools, strategies, and resources to address common barriers such as transportation, housing instability, food insecurity, and mental health. Through these efforts, we aim to help improve student attendance and promote long-term academic success.
- Additionally, Wade Bonner, our Northaven Elementary Specialist, will be highlighted in a Slingshot video, showcasing his incredible work and creativity for the MPROVE Award. Wade's unique approach to engaging students will be celebrated, underscoring his dedication to the mission.
- In February, our S3s will participate in the Student Support Institute both virtually and in person in Las Vegas, Nevada. This professional development opportunity will empower our specialists with new insights, strategies, and tools to elevate their impact in schools.
- Also, the excitement continues with Read Across America Week! Schools will engage in a fun competition where students will submit bookmarks or Raps, Rhymes, and Lyrics, with the chance to win. The week will feature mystery readers from the community, culminating in the winning school celebrating with a CISM-sponsored RAA Carnival on March 7th!

>> College & Career Readiness (CCR):

- This Spring Break, CISM is taking high school juniors and seniors on an unforgettable college tour in North Carolina! Students will visit campuses, interact with current college students and CIS alumni, and explore student life opportunities. This immersive experience will help students visualize their future academic paths and gain valuable cultural exposure, fostering confidence in their ability to succeed in higher education and beyond.

>> Care Coordination:

- Our Parent Workshop on March 25th promises to be an enriching opportunity for families to gain tools, resources, and guidance to navigate their children's educational and personal challenges. We're excited to equip parents with the knowledge they need to support their children's academic journey and overall well-being.

>> Alumni Network:

- Excitement is building for our CISM Alumni Night at the Grizzlies vs. Rockets game, where alumni will have the chance to reconnect and celebrate their shared experiences. In addition, our virtual tax workshop with Rebecca Bryson will offer valuable financial guidance, and Job Tips with Kai will equip our alumni with career-readiness tools to further their professional growth.

>> Collective Impact:

- In Quarter 3, we're focused on building community and supporting our staff. Our All-Staff Retreat on January 31 will bring everyone together for a day of reflection, collaboration, and team-building. Our Collective Impact team leaders will also attend the DevelopHer Conference hosted by the Junior League in March, gaining valuable knowledge to continue driving collective impact in our work.
- March 5th will be a special day as we host our Employee Appreciation Celebration, recognizing the dedication and hard work of our CISM team.
- To cap off the excitement, we're celebrating the achievements of our staff at the Slingshot MPACT Awards on March 27th, where outstanding contributions to our mission will be recognized and celebrated.