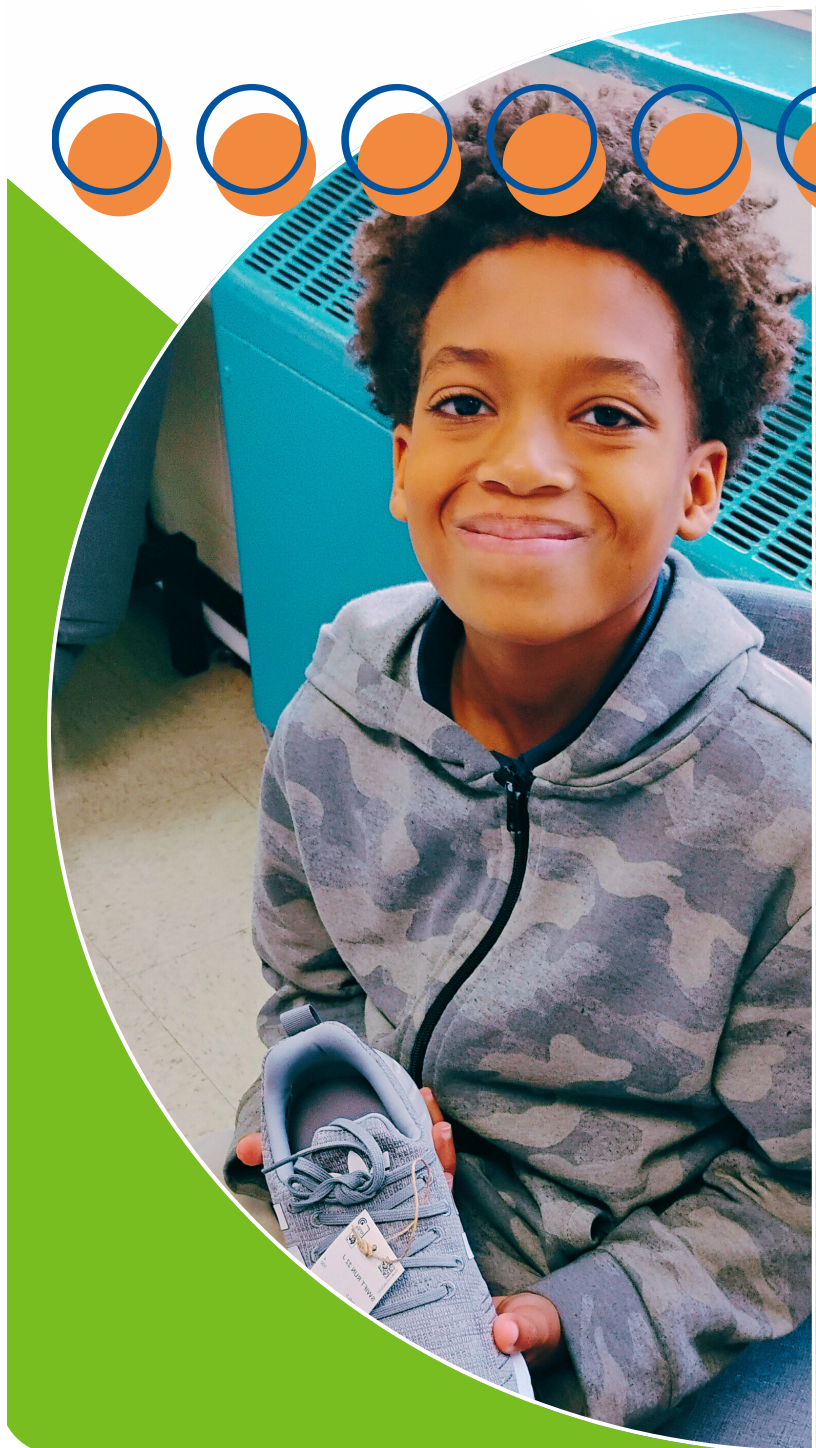




2025-26 QUARTER 1 REPORT

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025



Communities
In Schools®

Memphis

#AllinforYouth

FROM OUR INTERIM CO-CEOs



**Kelsey
Kenniel-Hardy**

**Jessica
Pontoo**

As we close out the first quarter of the 2025–26 school year, we want to express our deep gratitude to our school partners, community organizations, families, and the entire CISM team for their continued trust and collaboration. Serving as Interim Co-CEOs during this time of transition has been a privilege, and we are incredibly proud of the groundwork our team has laid to strengthen supports for students through the start of a new school year in Memphis.

This quarter has been defined by connection and collective action. One of the most meaningful developments is our role in the More for Memphis initiative, a coordinated effort to boost economic mobility for families across the city. As the lead for the K–12 workgroup, CISM is helping shape strategies that will expand opportunity for students in South Memphis schools, ensuring families are connected to the resources and networks they need to thrive.

We were also thrilled to officially welcome Believe Memphis Academy into the CISM family this fall. Together with Principal Matt Cowan and his leadership team, we're working to advance shared goals around attendance, engagement, and family support. Their enthusiasm and steadfast belief in this partnership have reminded us of what's possible when a school and a community organization move forward in lockstep.

Across our network, we've continued to expand and deepen community partnerships, bringing new mental health supports, parent resources, essential items, and whole-child opportunities into our schools. These relationships are the heart of our model, and they make it possible for students to feel seen, supported, and surrounded by a community that believes in them.

As we reflect on a successful first quarter, we are also excited for what lies ahead. The Board of Directors will announce CISM's next permanent CEO this fall, and we look forward to supporting a smooth handoff as we return to our full-time roles within the organization. We are confident that the foundation we've built together, grounded in partnership, impact, and unwavering commitment, will help usher in a strong next chapter for CISM.

Thank you for walking alongside us and for believing in what's possible when students are surrounded by a community of support. We look forward to the work ahead.



***With gratitude and commitment,
Kelsey Kenniel-Hardy & Jessica Pontoo***

DELIVERING ON OUR PROMISES



PREPARE MORE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES FOR SUCCESS IN LIFE

College & Career-Readiness (CCR)

- CISM launched a **new partnership with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission** to implement the Direct Admissions Pilot, a statewide effort designed to remove barriers to college access. Through this initiative, eligible high school students are proactively admitted to in-state postsecondary institutions using existing academic data, eliminating traditional applications, fees, and uncertainty. Students also receive personalized financial aid information up front, making the path to college clearer, more accessible, and more equitable.

Alumni Network

- The alumni network is launching a **new Alumni Advisory Council**, a stipended opportunity designed to engage alumni and gather meaningful feedback to inform future programs and initiatives. Council members will receive priority access to travel conferences (with expenses covered if selected) and early access to scholarships, special programs, and exclusive alumni opportunities. This initiative provides alumni with a chance to remain connected, build leadership experience, and make a tangible impact on the alumni community. Stipends are awarded to members who meet participation and engagement guidelines.
- On August 23, CISM hosted an **Introduction to Pottery Making workshop**, offering alumni a hands-on, wellness-focused creative experience centered on pottery wheel-throwing. Designed to support mindfulness, confidence, and emotional well-being, the event also strengthened alumni relationships and elevated youth leadership through planning and facilitation by Alumni Advisory Committee member Angelic Bell. All participants tried pottery for the first time, created their own ceramic pieces, and reported feeling relaxed, inspired, and eager for more art- and wellness-based workshops. The workshop successfully advanced key alumni engagement goals by fostering connection, creativity, and leadership.

Care Coordination

- The Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) hosted the **2025 Back-to-School Family Fun Day**, a community-centered event focused on academic readiness, resource access, and reducing stigma for families experiencing instability. More than 400 attendees participated, including over 300 youth and 100 adults. Students received 180 supply-packed backpacks and 200+ pairs of new shoes, while families enjoyed games, music, food, and entertainment from MBA's band and a live DJ. More than eight community providers and local vendors offered on-site support and services. The event created a welcoming, dignified space for families to connect, celebrate, and prepare for the year ahead.





BUILD A VIBRANT CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY

Operations & Finance

- CISM completed a successful **HR audit** this quarter, and all staff participated in annual supervisory training. The audit surfaced several opportunities to strengthen internal systems, including the development of a Generative AI policy and refining organizational language around equity and belonging. CISM was also awarded a **second-year grant from the Altria Foundation** to support youth smoking cessation efforts. In addition, the organization introduced the Culture Index, an analytics-based advisory tool that helps leaders strengthen decision-making, team alignment, and organizational growth.

Collective Impact

- In August, our team came together for a two-day **Collective Impact Retreat** focused on strengthening communication and deepening collaboration across the organization. Facilitated by Ashley Watkins, Mishala Holmes, Kindra Davis-Harris, and Terra Cousin, the session, “Stronger Together: Communication & Team Cohesion,” centered on building trust, navigating conflict effectively, and improving how teams work through challenges. Grounded in Patrick Lencioni’s Five Dysfunctions of a Team model, the retreat explored how vulnerability builds trust, how healthy disagreement strengthens decisions, and how shared accountability drives stronger results. Participants also practiced practical communication skills such as psychological safety, constructive conflict, feedback, and active listening. The retreat closed with each team member identifying personal commitments to strengthen collaboration, ensuring the lessons from the session carry forward into daily practice.
- We **expanded our network of community partnerships** essential to removing barriers for students and families in Quarter 1, strengthening our ability to surround students with a connected, caring community grounded in holistic support.
 - **Sister Supply** provided a large donation of feminine hygiene products, ensuring our young women have the essential items they need to feel confident and supported.
 - **One-By-One Ministries** renewed its partnership with CISM, offering mentorship and parenting resources to pregnant and first-time teen parents.
 - **Mental Health Cooperative** joined our network to increase access to mental health services and support SEL-focused small groups.
 - **University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC)** deepened its partnership with CISM, bringing expanded services to South Memphis schools. Dr. Alicia Barnes is leading SEL training for Student Support Specialists to enhance our capacity for trauma-informed and relationship-centered support.

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BUILD A VIBRANT CULTURE OF INCLUSIVITY - Cont.

Collective Impact - Cont.

- Peyton Worst, LaVonda Burks, and Charie Carroll completed the **Developmental Relationships Framework (DRF) Train-the-Trainer certification** this quarter. This achievement expands our internal training capacity, supports high-quality implementation of the DRF Framework across schools, and strengthens our focus on building student connectedness and engagement.
- A data team subcommittee simplified the **student satisfaction survey** this quarter and developed a facilitation guide to ensure more consistent administration across school sites. These improvements will strengthen data quality, elevate student voice, and support deeper analysis of student experiences throughout the year.
- The Program Development Team launched the **Change Management Roadmap**, a blueprint guiding upcoming program restructuring efforts. The roadmap prioritizes strategic planning, stakeholder alignment, and thoughtful execution. Two early changes under review include implementing a new clock-in/clock-out system for the Integrated Student Supports team and shifting the College & Career Readiness college tour from spring to fall to increase student access and participation.



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CISM BY THE NUMBERS



On August 16, the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program (YHDP) hosted our Back-to-School Family Fun Day—a joyful, community-rooted celebration designed to help students begin the school year feeling prepared, confident, and supported. More than a supply giveaway, the event created a welcoming space where families could gather, connect with resources, and enjoy a memorable day together. Every service and activity was offered at no cost and designed to honor culture, inclusion, and equity—reflecting CISM’s commitment to removing barriers for Memphis students and families.



TANGIBLE IMPACT:

More than **400** people attended—including over **300** youth and **100** caregivers—filling the day with energy, music, and laughter.

Thanks to **80+** volunteers contributing **175** service hours, families enjoyed a true community festival atmosphere, complete with games, live entertainment, and hands-on activities for all ages.

In total, more than \$12,000 in investments and \$3,000 in in-kind donations ensured every family received high-quality support to help remove financial stress and ensure a strong start to the school year.

- **180** school supply bags (\$2,100 value)
- **200** pairs of donated tennis shoes (\$10,000 value)
- **400** meals (\$1,600 value)
- **200** carnival treats (\$1,500 value)
- **30** home-essential baskets (\$900 value)
- **20** door prizes, gift cards, giveaways (\$500 value)



LASTING CONNECTIONS:

These supports helped ease financial strain for families, freeing them to focus on stability, not stress. Many parents shared how meaningful the event felt, calling it “exactly what the community needed.” The resource connections also open the door to longer-term support during the year.

- **Community Resources:** YMCA, A Step Ahead Foundation, Mental Health Cooperative, Love Doesn’t Hurt, Restore Corp, Youth Connect, Planned Parenthood & the Youth Advisory Board from the Community Alliance for the Homeless (CAFTH)
- **Local Businesses:** Juicy Fuel, Redd’s Tasty Shack, Junk’d by Krysis/Irresistible Lipgloss & Mexico in Memphis
- **Extra Support:** Free internet via TING



Q1 PROGRESS SNAPSHOT



Integrated School Supports (ISS)

- 50% of ISS partner schools increased in-school presence among students
- 62% of case-managed students improved their report card grades in one or more core subjects
- 81% of students raised their average daily attendance
- 91% of case-managed students are strengthening their college readiness skills
- 65% of students demonstrated measurable gains in social-emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making)
- \$7,900+ in supportive services and incentives were provided to students and families across our Full-Service Community Schools

College & Career Readiness Goals

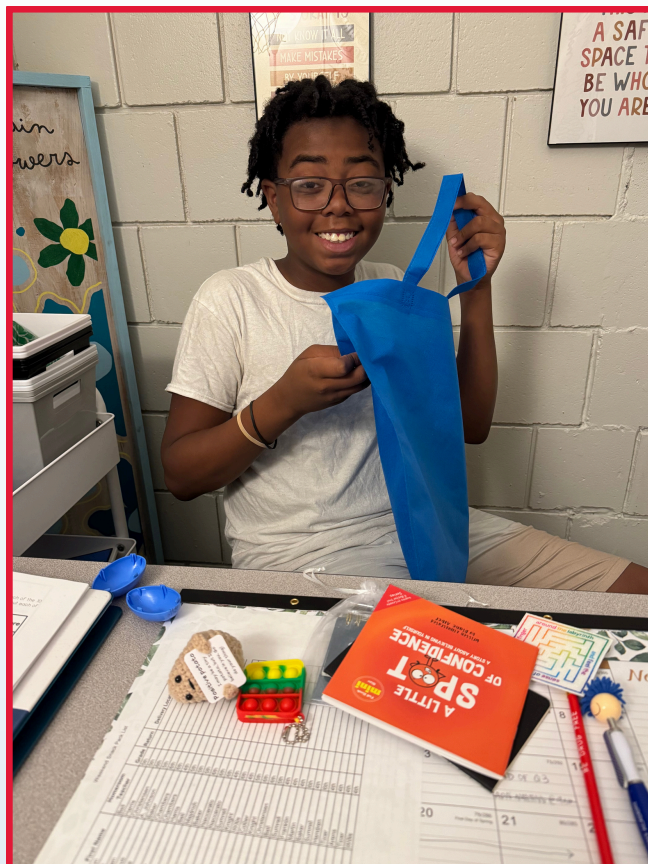
- 82 high school and postsecondary students enrolled
- \$6K+ earned through paid work experiences
- \$22K+ provided in supportive services, including transportation, rent/utilities assistance, school/work supplies, and uniforms

Alumni Network

- 36 alumni actively engaged in programming; 9 first-time participants
- 74 total engagement hours
- 32 hours of personal wellness activities
- 8 hours of postsecondary support

Care Coordination

- Year 2 of the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program completed in September
- 15 participants enrolled this quarter
- 50 total participants supported year-to-date
- \$3,800+ spent on supportive services
 - Families received: rental assistance, eviction prevention support, utilities assistance, groceries, and household essentials





Success Story

Bouncing Back to School

As the new school year approached, Communities In Schools of Memphis hosted its first Back-to-School Family Fun Day—a joyful, community-centered event designed to help students and families feel confident, supported, and ready for the year ahead. Families gathered to enjoy a day filled with resources, new school supplies, and a sense of celebration that set a positive tone for the start of school.

Among the attendees was Ms. Thompson, a devoted mother working hard to prepare her children for the year despite financial pressures many families face. At the event, her children received brand-new shoes, backpacks filled with essential supplies, and enjoyed a hot meal—removing barriers that could have made the return to school stressful. Her youngest spent nearly the entire afternoon bouncing, laughing, and making new friends in the inflatable play area, while Ms. Thompson joined other parents for a relaxing sip-and-paint activity and a supportive parent workshop.

By the end of the day, she shared that the event lifted a huge weight off her shoulders. Instead of worry, her family left with excitement, confidence, and smiles—reminded that their community is standing with them.

This is the heart of what CISM strives to do: surround families with the support they deserve so students can show up ready to thrive.



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>> College & Career Readiness (CCR)

In the months ahead, ISS and CCR seniors will receive targeted support to navigate the college-going process, including guidance on college applications, strengthening personal statements, scholarship searches, and completing the FAFSA. WIOA-enrolled students will also have access to application fee assistance and 1:1 FAFSA completion sessions.

Additionally, a select group of CCR seniors will participate in a Fall Break college tour to Tallahassee, where they will explore campus life at Florida A&M University and Florida State University during guided visits and student engagement activities.

>> Care Coordination (CC)

The YHDP team will host the 3rd Annual Homeless to Hopeful event on Wednesday, November 19th, during National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week. Held at the Hospitality Hub from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., this event will bring together partners, service providers, and volunteers to offer essential support and resources to individuals and families experiencing homelessness.

>> Alumni Network

Next quarter, the Alumni Network will launch its new Alumni Advisory Council, a stipended leadership opportunity designed to elevate alumni voice and shape future programming. Council members will contribute feedback, help guide network initiatives, and gain access to exclusive opportunities—including priority selection for travel conferences (with covered expenses), early access to scholarships, and invitation-only alumni events. Stipends will be provided to members who meet participation and engagement expectations.

>> Collective Impact

As the holiday season approaches, CISM will kick off its annual Angel Tree Initiative, rallying partners and community members to provide gifts and essential items for students and families across Memphis. This year's effort will once again invite supporters to “adopt” a student angel and help ensure that every child experiences warmth, dignity, and joy during the holidays.

Community members will be able to select an angel, purchase gifts, and drop them off at the CISM office by December 3, and gifts will be distributed at the Angel Tree celebration on December 16 at 6 p.m.

