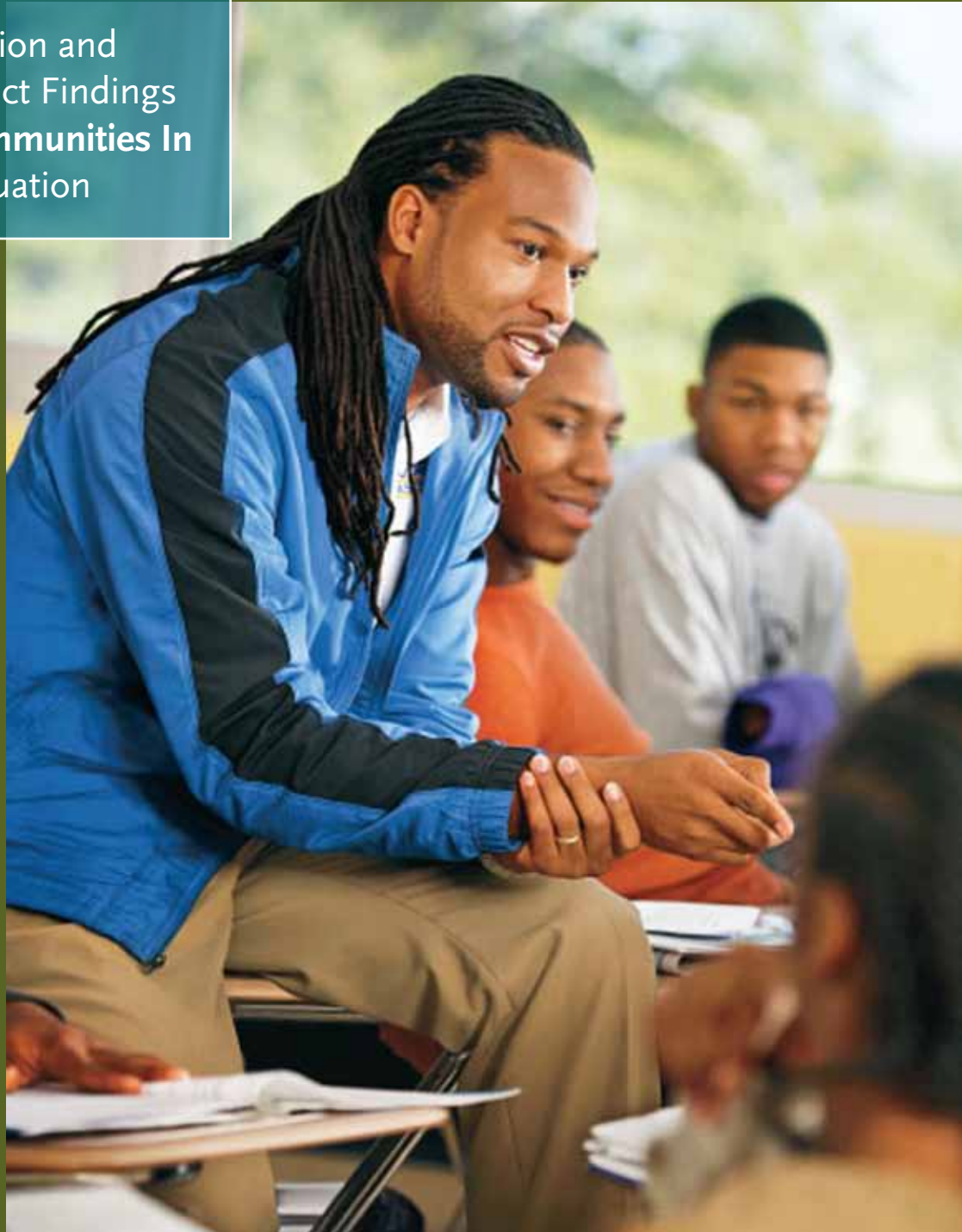# CASE MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS AT RISK OF DROPPING OUT

Implementation and Interim Impact Findings from the **Communities In Schools** Evaluation

William Corrin
Leigh M. Parise
Oscar Cerna
Zeest Haider
Marie-Andrée Somers

April 2015

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BUILDING KNOWLEDGE
TO IMPROVE SOCIAL POLICY

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Overview

Too many students drop out and never earn their high school diploma. For students at risk of dropping out, academic, social, and other supports may help. Communities In Schools seeks to organize and provide these supports to at-risk students in the nation's poorest-performing schools, including through "case-managed" services. School-based Communities In Schools site coordinators identify at-risk students, work with them individually to assess their needs, develop a case plan to meet those needs, connect them with supports in the school and community based on that plan, and monitor their progress to ensure that their needs are met.

This report, the first of two from a random assignment evaluation of Communities In Schools case management, focuses primarily on the implementation of case management in 28 secondary schools during the 2012-2013 school year. The implementation research yielded several key findings:

- The services provided by Communities In Schools were an important component of the participating schools' support systems for students, but there were also many services provided by school staff members and other external partners.

- Over about 30 weeks, case-managed students received an average of 19 service contacts totaling 16 hours. More than 75 percent of case-managed students received academic services, about 60 percent received social or life skills support, and half received behavior support.

- "Higher-risk" case-managed students — those who failed a course or were chronically absent or suspended in the previous year — did not receive more case-managed services than others.

- Compared with those randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, case-managed students reported participating in more in-school support activities in several categories, including academically and behaviorally focused meetings with adults and mentoring.

The report also includes interim one-year findings about case management's impact on student outcomes.

- Case management had a positive impact on students' reports of having caring, supportive relationships with adults outside of home and school, the quality of their friendships, and their belief that education matters for their future. But for most outcomes concerning students' interpersonal relationships and educational perspectives — relationships with caring, supportive adults at home or school and educational attitudes, engagement, goals, and expectations — there were no notable differences between case-managed and non-case-managed students.

- After one year, Communities In Schools case management has not yet demonstrated improvement in students' attendance or course performance, or reduced behaviors that lead to disciplinary action — outcomes associated with increasing their chances of graduation. It is possible that case management could take more than a year to show an effect.

This report concludes with suggestions for improvement for Communities In Schools based mainly on the implementation findings. The next report will present two-year impact findings and more about the implementation of case management in the 2013-2014 school year.

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Preface

School success for young people depends on more than teaching and learning; many students require supports that go beyond the classroom. Young people growing up in low-income communities often face social and economic challenges that put obstacles in the way of their progress through school and increase the chances that they will drop out. Fortunately, schools and local community-based organizations often provide services to students intended to address these challenges. Unfortunately, having an array of providers can result in fragmented or inconsistent service delivery, redundancies, and gaps, which can limit the power of these services to help students.

Communities In Schools, an organization with a wide national reach, supports the implementation of a school-based model of integrated student support services that is intended to organize and supplement disparate services in a given school and community in an effort to strengthen their effectiveness. With a network of local affiliate offices across more than half the states in the nation, Communities In Schools has the potential to make a difference in the school outcomes of millions of students connected to its programming. Communities In Schools has also committed to being a learning organization, regularly evaluating aspects of its programming in order to improve its work on behalf of students.

This report is the first of two from an experimental evaluation of Communities In Schools student case management being conducted by MDRC. Case management is one component of the Communities In Schools whole-school model. This evaluation is valuable for a few reasons. First of all, it is generating information about aspects of Communities In Schools' on-the-ground program implementation intended to encourage organizational reflection and change regarding how to serve students better. Second, it is assessing the impact of case management, providing Communities In Schools staff members with information about how much of a difference they are making in the lives of case-managed students and where they might want to consider adjustments. Third, these findings will benefit other service providers who work with students facing similar obstacles.

Targeting services is a central challenge for school-based student support programs. Schools located in low-income communities often serve large populations of students who are struggling academically in the face of other demands on their time and attention. In this context, should student support programs concentrate their resources on a smaller group of students facing the greatest obstacles to high school completion or on a larger group at somewhat lesser risk of dropping out? As one of the largest providers of school-based integrated student services, Communities In Schools encounters such dilemmas regularly. In this evaluation the researchers hope to inform this and other decisions for Communities In Schools and for the field at large.

Gordon L. Berlin
President, MDRC

Acknowledgments

Executive Summary

Every day more than 7,000 students drop out of school.[1] One-fifth of students who enter high school do not graduate within four years,[2] and more than two-fifths of Latino and African-American boys drop out.[3] Compared with high school graduates, dropouts are more likely to live in poverty, suffer from poor health, be involved in crime, or be dependent on social services.[4] Many students at risk of dropping out need academic, social, and other supports to make it through high school, but these services are scattered across numerous government agencies and nonprofits. This fragmented delivery of services limits their potential to change the path of an at-risk student. And teachers and principals, for their part, are often overwhelmed by the emotional, social, and personal issues facing students. Integrating student support services and connecting them with schools is viewed as a promising approach to assist school staff members and help students stay on track to graduate.[5]

The Communities In Schools Model of Integrated Student Supports

Communities In Schools uses an integrated student support model to assist schools and communities, working with low-income students at risk of failing or dropping out of the nation's poorest-performing schools. Founded in 1977 by children's advocate Bill Milliken, Communities In Schools now serves more than 1.3 million students and their families.[6] It is active in over 2,000 school sites, and the national office oversees a network of nearly 200 local affiliates in 26 states and the District of Columbia. Communities In Schools' national office establishes guidance on standards of practice, offers technical assistance to the local affiliates, and acts as a political advocate on behalf of the network. In these roles, the national office can influence how the affiliates approach model implementation within the local school districts with which they

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[1]Christopher B. Swanson, "Progress Postponed," *Education Week* 29, no. 34 (2010): 22-23, 30.

[2]Richard J. Murnane, *U.S. High School Graduation Rates: Patterns and Explanations* (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2013); Marie C. Stetser and Robert Stillwell, *Public High School Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School Years 2010-11 and 2011-12* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

[3]Schott Foundation for Public Education, *The Urgency of Now: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males* (Cambridge, MA: Schott Foundation for Public Education, 2012).

[4]Child Trends, "High School Dropout Rates," last modified October 2014, http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=high-school-dropout-rates.

[5]Kristin A. Moore, Selma Caal, Rachel Carney, Laura Lippman, Weilin Li, Katherine Muenks, David Murphey, Dan Princiotta, Alysha Ramirez, Angela Rojas, Renee Ryberg, Hannah Schmitz, Brandon Stratford, and Mary Terzian, *Making the Grade: Assessing Evidence for Integrated Student Supports* (Bethesda, MD: Child Trends, 2014).

[6]Communities In Schools, *2013 Annual Report* (Arlington, VA: Communities In Schools, 2014).

work. But as independent nonprofit organizations with their own boards of directors and local funding support, the affiliates have final determination in how the Communities In Schools model is carried out in their school sites. This autonomy results in variation in the details of the model's implementation around the country.

Nonetheless, there is a common understanding of the nature of the Communities In Schools comprehensive service model across the national network. The intent of this model is to reduce dropout rates by integrating community and school-based support services within schools through the provision of "Level 1" and "Level 2" services. Level 1 services are broadly available to all students or to groups of students and are usually short-term, low-intensity activities or services (for example, making clothing or school supplies available to students, organizing a school-wide career fair, or hosting a financial aid workshop for twelfth-graders). Level 1 services also include short-term "crisis" interventions when an extreme event disrupts a student's life (for example, finding a solution if the power is turned off at the student's home or providing short-term counseling in response to a traumatic event). Communities In Schools site coordinators — those responsible for all school-based operations — spend much of their time focused on more intensive Level 2 "case-managed" services, which they provide to a subset of students displaying one or more significant risk factors, such as poor academic performance, a high absentee rate, or behavioral problems. In case management, site coordinators work with individual students to identify their needs, connect them with supports in the school and community to address those needs, and regularly monitor their progress to ensure that their needs continue to be met.

Communities In Schools Case Management

This report focuses on the Level 2 case management component of the Communities In Schools comprehensive model of integrated student supports, as implemented at both the middle school and high school levels.[7] Figure ES.1 presents the case management logic model. The "Context/Resources" column in the figure shows factors that support or affect case management service provision. For example, available financial resources and the number of students in a school influence how many site coordinators might be assigned there; existing youth and family service organizations represent the pool of potential local service providers with which site coordinators can partner.

The second column, labeled "Activities," outlines case management itself. Through a review of data or by referrals from adults in the school, the site coordinator identifies a student

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[7]The comprehensive Communities In Schools model is implemented across grades K-12, in elementary, middle, and high schools. This evaluation of case management focuses only on secondary schools.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Figure ES.1

Communities In Schools (CIS) Case Management Logic Model

Context/Resources	Activities	Mediators	Outcomes

CIS Staff
• Site coordinators
• Affiliate program directors
• Other staff/volunteers
 	
School Staff
• Teachers
• Counselors/student services
• Principals and assistant principals
 	
School Structures
• Facilities
• Scheduling/time
 	
Existing Services
• School
• Community
 	
Funding
• School and district
• Local foundations and community organizations
• CIS state/CIS national
• Other
 	
Data
• School and district characteristics
• School needs
• Student characteristics
• Student needs
	1. At-risk student identified for case management
	
	2. Assessment completed to identify specific needs
	
	3. Case plan developed, includes services prescribed to address student needs
	
	4. Student receives services that fall into eight categories:
	  • **Academic services**
	  • **Behavior services**
	  • **Attendance services**
	  • **Social/life skills services**
	  • **Basic needs/resources**
	  • **College/career preparation**
	  • **Enrichment/motivation**
	  • **Family-related services**
	
	Service providers vary from school to school, but may include CIS site staff, a school staff member, and/or someone from outside the school, either a volunteer or a paid service provider
	
	5. CIS site staff monitor and adjust services based on student needs
		Student connection to caring adult
		
		School engagement
		
		Attitudes about education
		
		Educational self-perception
			Primary
			
			• Decreased dropout (decreased chronic absenteeism)
			
			• Increased high school graduation (reduced course failure)
			
			Secondary
			
			• Increased credit accumulation
			
			• Improved attendance
			
			• Decreased behavioral infractions
			
			• Improved academic performance

as potentially at risk for eventually dropping out and seeks consent from a parent or guardian for the student to receive case-managed services. The site coordinator then assesses the student's needs, develops an individualized case plan, and sets goals with the student. Based on the case plan, the site coordinator provides or connects the student to services specific to his or her needs. (See Box ES.1 for examples of these services.) During the year, the site coordinator monitors student progress and adjusts the plan as necessary based on changes in the student's needs.

The case management activities are expected to affect "Mediators" (the third column) related to students' attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. The services provided to a student are intended to help foster supportive relationships with adults and peers, encourage greater engagement with school, stimulate greater effort to meet academic and behavioral expectations, and increase the value that students see in their schooling. Impacts on these mediators are theorized to affect such student outcomes as attendance, performance in class, and disruptive behavior in school, as listed in the "Outcomes" column.

Box ES.1

What Kinds of Activities Are Included in Each Service Type?

Academic services. Adult or peer tutoring, homework assistance, study skills activities, student-teacher conferences

Behavior services. Conflict resolution groups, anger management or other behavioral counseling, violence prevention activities, behavior monitoring and interventions

Attendance services. In-person attendance check-ins and planning

Social or life skills services. Goal-setting activities; self-esteem enhancement activities; girls' or boys' groups; social, relationship, and communication activities; team-building games and activities; crisis and grief counseling services

Basic needs and resources. Provision of school supplies; assistance with utilities, rent, etc.; food and clothing assistance; health activities and checkups

College and career preparation. College admissions preparation and assistance, career counseling, college visits and career field trips, college awareness activities and programs

Enrichment or motivation services. Community service, field trips unrelated to college or career preparation, sports or exercise activities, scouting, arts and crafts, student recognition activities and incentives

Family-related services. Parent education, home visits, parent conferences and contacts, parent and family events and activities, family counseling

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Evaluating the Communities In Schools Integrated Student Services Model

In its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, the Communities In Schools national office looks to external organizations to provide independent and objective research intended to help its staff understand how its model is being implemented in schools and what its impact is on schools and students. A previous evaluation by ICF International suggested that young people who receive Communities In Schools services are more likely to achieve a number of positive outcomes than those who do not.[8] Given the opportunity to expand its evidence base and strengthen its network through a federal grant program, Communities In Schools engaged MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization, to conduct an independent, two-study evaluation funded by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation Social Innovation Fund and the Wallace Foundation.[9]

One study focuses on the implementation and impact of Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services, examining service provision, student experiences, and student outcomes in the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. This study relies on a random assignment research design, often referred to as the "gold standard" evaluation design. Random assignment is a lottery-like process by which individuals are assigned either to participate in a specific program or to continue with whatever the "business as usual" alternative(s) might be. When there are more individuals interested in and eligible for a program than there are available slots, this process both provides a fair way to determine who participates in the program and creates two equivalent groups. The 16 middle schools and 12 high schools included in this study each had more eligible students — those facing academic, attendance, behavioral, and/or personal challenges that threatened to impede their progress toward high school graduation — than could be included on site coordinators' caseloads. Thus students were randomly assigned to join site coordinators' caseloads (1,140 students in the *case-managed* group) or to continue with business as usual at their schools, with access to whatever other student supports were available (1,090 students in the *non-case-managed* group). Since random assignment created two comparable groups and the sample is large, individual characteristics of the students are, on average, the same for both groups. Therefore, any

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[8]ICF International, *Communities In Schools National Evaluation: Five Year Summary Report* (Fairfax, VA: ICF International, 2010); Allan Porowski and Aikaterini Passa, "The Effect of Communities In Schools on High School Dropout and Graduation Rates: Results From a Multiyear, School-Level Quasi-Experimental Study," *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)* 16, no. 1 (2011): 24-37.

[9]The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) received a Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant from the federal Corporation for National and Community Service. Communities In Schools is a subgrantee to EMCF within the SIF program. Thus, while Communities In Schools was interested in ongoing evaluation, this evaluation is also being conducted as one of the required activities of the SIF grant program. It also aligns with EMCF's interest in supporting organizations that are participating in evidence-generating research.

differences that emerge over time between these two groups in outcomes such as their attendance, course performance, and behavior, as well as their attitudes about school and their relationships with peers and adults, can be attributed to Communities In Schools case management. This report is the first of two planned for this study.

The second study in this evaluation investigates the impact of the Communities In Schools comprehensive model, including both Level 1 and Level 2 services. In the second study, the impact of the comprehensive model is estimated by looking at student outcomes at schools before and after they implement the model and comparing the outcomes with those of students at a set of similar schools not implementing the model during the same period of time.[10] The results from this quasi-experimental study will be presented in a separate evaluation report.

Studying the Implementation and Impact of Case Management

This first report from the evaluation of Communities In Schools case management focuses primarily on its implementation. It looks at Communities In Schools' operations and the contexts of the schools in which site coordinators work, the case management process, and how case management affects students' school experiences, in particular which kinds of services students receive in an effort to help them succeed. Since it is expected that case management may take more than one year to start having an impact on students' school outcomes, the one-year impact findings are considered interim findings.[11] The second report from this study of case management will present more definitive, two-year impact findings.

This study draws upon varied quantitative and qualitative data sources to learn about case management's implementation and interim impacts. They include surveys of school leaders and Communities In Schools site coordinators; in-person interviews with school principals, site coordinators, case-managed and non-case-managed students, and staff members of the local Communities In Schools affiliates; management information system (MIS) data (regularly reported information on the services site coordinators provide or coordinate for

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[10]This is known as a "comparative interrupted time series" design.

[11]Research on other student support programs such as AVID and the Higher Achievement Program have found null or negative impacts on outcomes such as attendance, course grades, and standardized test scores after the first year of student participation, and then found positive impacts by the second or third year of support. A report on integrated student services has also indicated that the impacts of such services can take time to emerge. See Elizabeth Dunn, Heather S. Fowler, Doug Tattrie, Claudia Nicholson, Saul Schwartz, Judith Hutchison, Isaac Kwakye, Reuben Ford, and Sabina Dobrer, *BC AVID Pilot Project: Interim Impacts Report* (Ottawa: Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2010); Carla Herrera, Jean B. Grossman, and Leigh L. Linden, *Staying On Track: Testing Higher Achievement's Long-Term Impact on Academic Outcomes and High School Choice* (New York: A Public/Private Ventures project distributed by MDRC, 2013); Moore et al. (2014).

individual students); surveys of case-managed and non-case-managed students; and student records data obtained from the local school districts. The first four data sources — adult surveys, in-person interviews, MIS data, and student surveys — all inform the implementation research, providing information about the "Context" and "Activities" categories in the case management logic model. Student surveys also provide information for the analysis of the impact of case management on mediating outcomes ("Mediators"). Student records data provide information for the analysis of its impact on school outcomes ("Outcomes").

One-Year Implementation Findings

The implementation research investigates the nature of Communities In Schools site coordinators' work with students and adults within their schools — the "where, what, and how" of their work. The findings from this research address questions about context, fidelity of implementation, service receipt, and service contrast.

Context: Where and Under What Circumstances Is Case Management Being Implemented?

The 28 schools participating in this study are spread across seven school districts and five Communities In Schools local affiliates in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. Most of these schools are located in and around large or midsized cities, and all receive funding under Title I, the federal program that supports schools that have a large proportion of disadvantaged children. About 60 percent of the students in the study schools are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and nearly 85 percent are black or Hispanic students. On average, the high school and middle school student enrollments are more than 1,500 students and 700 students respectively.

School leaders and Communities In Schools site coordinators reported that many types of services are offered by school staff, Communities In Schools, and other external partners to address challenges faced by their students. Communities In Schools appears to be an important part of the study schools' student support environments, offering a variety of Level 1 services that are widely available to students in the school and providing Level 2 case-managed services to approximately 10 percent of students on average. The site coordinators in the study schools had an average of more than five years of experience in their positions and many had or were working toward advanced degrees in social work or counseling.

Program Fidelity: How Similar Is Case Management As Implemented to the Model As Designed?

Fidelity was assessed qualitatively, drawing predominantly on interviews conducted with site coordinators, school staff, and students on site visits conducted at 18 of the study

schools across all five local affiliates. This assessment focused on the process of case management (Figure ES.2), or how site coordinators identified and worked with students on their caseloads. Each step of the case management process — identification, assessment, case planning, service provision, and monitoring and adjusting — was implemented across all visited sites, which is notable given the autonomy of the local affiliates within the Communities In Schools national network. Details of how each step was implemented varied across affiliates, however.

Site coordinators primarily turn to administrators, teachers, and other support staff to help identify students in need of case management and to begin to understand students' areas of need. But needs assessments for case-managed students are conducted differently across affiliates, with some being substantially more in depth than others. After the needs assessment, all site coordinators develop case plans for and with their case-managed students. The level of detail included in the case plan and the extent to which it guides practice throughout the school year also vary by affiliate and by school.

Across schools and affiliates, the services provided for case-managed students focus primarily on academic assistance, behavior, and social skills development. Many services are provided directly by Communities In Schools staff or associated partner organizations; other services are activities or supports provided by school staff, which the site coordinator facilitates or encourages students to participate in. Once students have started receiving services, most site coordinators monitor case-managed students' progress by reviewing students' school records, although the frequency of these reviews differs across affiliates, and many site coordinators explained that formal adjustments to case plans may only occur periodically.

Service Receipt: What Services Do Students Receive, How Many Times, and for How Long?

Students in the Communities In Schools case-managed group received an average of 19.4 service contacts during the year, which amounted to an average of 16.2 total Level 2 service hours. These services include both those provided directly by site coordinators and those to which site coordinators referred students. Students were enrolled on caseloads for an average of about 30 weeks of the year, translating to about 2.5 service contacts monthly lasting an average of about 50 minutes each. The greatest proportion of case-managed students (three out of four) received academic services, three out of five received social or life skills services, and half received behavior-related services.

There was substantial variation in service receipt among case-managed students, with some students receiving very low levels of services and others receiving high levels. The study team looked at whether this variation was associated with a student being "high risk" (having

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Figure ES.2

Communities In Schools Case Management Process

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│   Student identified for case        │
│          management                  │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│  Assessment completed to identify    │
│    individual needs and set goals    │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│  Case plan developed to address      │
│     student needs and goals          │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│    Case-managed services provided    │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                      │
│  Services and student progress       │
│           monitored                  │
│  Plan adjusted to meet student needs │
│                                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```
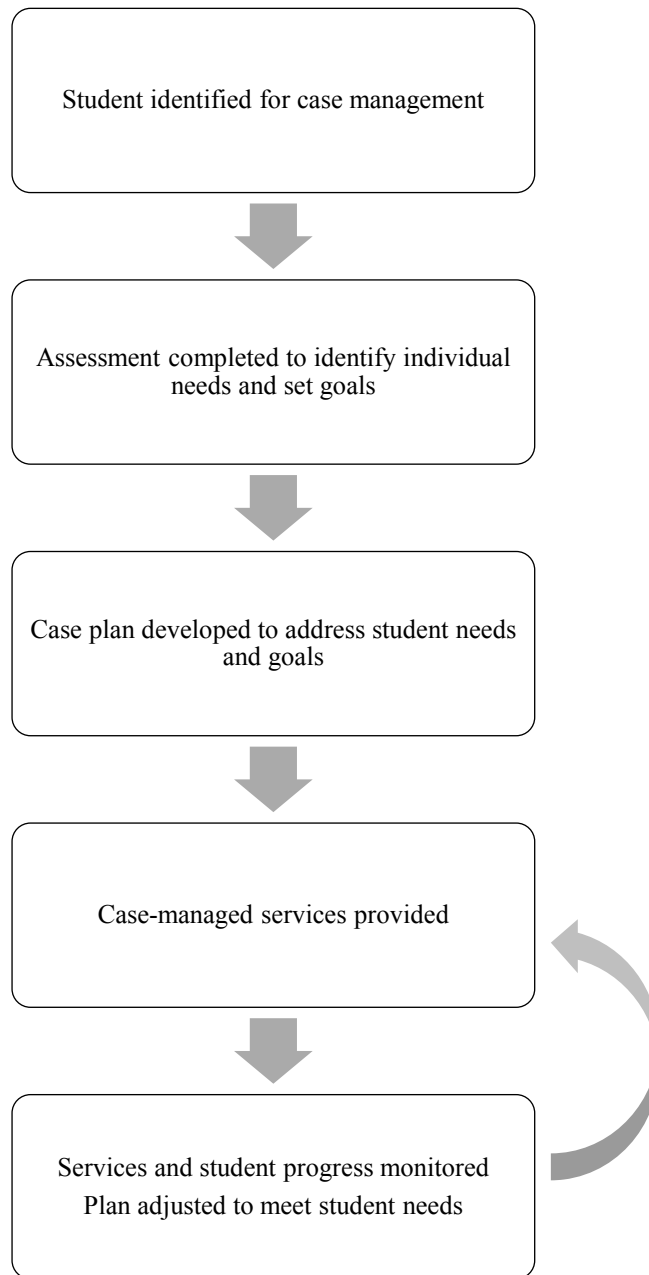
failed a course, been chronically absent, or been suspended in the prior year).[12] While there were minor differences in the levels of services Communities In Schools provided to high- and moderate-risk students, high-risk case-managed students did not receive more Level 2 service contacts or total hours overall than moderate-risk students.[13] If high-risk students, who are more likely to drop out of school, need more support than moderate-risk students, the provision of Level 2 services may need to be weighted more toward this group.

Service Contrast: Does Case Management Create a Difference Between the Experiences of Case-Managed Students and the Experiences of Non-Case-Managed Students?

Compared with non-case-managed students, Communities In Schools case-managed students generally reported participating in more support activities. Specifically, case-managed students were significantly more likely to report participating in individual and group meetings with adults in school, meeting with a mentor, participating in community service, and participating in positive behavior programs. The two groups of students were similar in their receipt of such services as homework help, tutoring, and college and career planning, and their participation in job shadowing or internships. At this stage of the study, it is unclear whether the number and magnitude of the differences between the two groups are enough to affect student outcomes. Also, because Communities In Schools coordinates Level 1 services accessible to all students, non-case-managed students have opportunities to engage with some of the same support services accessed by case-managed students. Thus it is possible that there is less contrast between the services used by the two groups of students than if Communities In Schools were not providing whole-school services as well as case management.

Interim Impact Findings

The implementation of Level 2 case management is intended to advance the larger goal of Communities In Schools to have a positive impact on students' *school progress*. That is, Communities In Schools seeks to reduce the number of dropouts and to increase the number of graduates. During the time frame for this study, it is not possible to track all students through high school graduation. Therefore, the focus of the impact analysis is on *primary outcomes* that

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[12]Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007) have found that as early as the sixth grade, 50 percent of future school dropouts in high-poverty schools exhibit indicators of falling off track — poor attendance, poor behavior, and poor course performance (that is, course failure). See Robert Balfanz, Liza Herzog, and Douglas MacIver, "Preventing Student Disengagement and Keeping Students on the Graduation Path in Urban Middle-Grades Schools: Early Identification and Effective Interventions," *Educational Psychologist* 42, no. 4 (2007): 223-235.

[13]Since all students must be deemed to have some risk to be eligible for case management to begin with, case-managed students who were not high risk are categorized as "moderate risk."

are predictive of students dropping out: chronic absenteeism and course failure in core academic subject areas.[14] The study also analyzes the impact of case management on a few *secondary outcomes*: attendance rate, course grades, credit earning (in high school), and suspensions. Furthermore, the study looks at the impact of case management on *mediating student outcomes* related to school engagement, relationships with adults and peers, student self-perception, and educational aspirations and expectations, which often represent nonacademic obstacles to academic success for students at risk of dropping out. Communities In Schools seeks to support students in overcoming these obstacles, setting a foundation for them to succeed in school. (See "Mediators" and "Outcomes" in Figure ES.1.)

Primary and secondary outcomes. Compared with non-case-managed students, case-managed students had a slightly higher rate of chronic absenteeism and a similar rate of core course failure. There were no significant differences between the groups on other measures of school progress, behavior, and academic achievement. Thus, after one year, Communities In Schools case management has not yet demonstrated improved outcomes for students related to attendance, course performance, and school discipline.

Mediating outcomes. Based on students' reports, Communities In Schools case management had a positive and statistically significant impact on students' likelihood of having caring, supportive relationships with adults outside of home and school; on the quality of their peer relationships; and on their belief that education has positive value for their lives. But for most of the mediating outcomes — relationships with caring, supportive adults at home or school, educational attitudes, school engagement, and educational goals and expectations — there were no notable differences between students in the case-managed and non-case-managed groups.

Suggestions for Continuous Improvement

Although the evaluation study of Communities In Schools Level 2 case management is ongoing, the research after one year suggests some areas where Communities In Schools may want to consider change.

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[14]Allensworth and Easton (2005) indicate that earning course credits and not failing core courses in ninth grade is predictive of eventual graduation, and Herlihy and Kemple (2004) and Quint (2006) discuss how crucial ninth grade is to students' progress to graduation. See Elaine M. Allensworth and John Q. Easton, *The On-Track Indicator as a Predictor of High School Graduation* (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2005); Corrine Herlihy and James J. Kemple, *The Talent Development High School Model: Context, Components, and Initial Impacts on Ninth-Grade Students' Engagement and Performance* (New York: MDRC, 2004); Janet Quint, *Meeting Five Critical Challenges of High School Reform: Lessons from Research on Three Reform Models* (New York: MDRC, 2006).

- The implementation research suggests that the participating schools and affiliates follow the same steps in the case management process — a noteworthy finding given Communities In Schools' expansive national network of relatively autonomous local affiliates — but with variations. In particular, site coordinators' ongoing assessment of students' needs and their use of data collected as part of the monitoring process may benefit from greater consistency across schools. Communities In Schools' national office could consider suggesting best practices for the network regarding how and with what kind of data site coordinators assess students' ongoing needs, as well as how site coordinators can best use these data to ensure that services are adjusted to continually address students' needs and increase the likelihood of improvements in student outcomes.

- Recognizing that some students have more intensive needs than others, Communities In Schools may want to develop additional guidelines regarding the relationship between levels of service and student needs. Even though site coordinators indicated in interviews that they paid different levels of attention to different students according to their needs, the analyses of service receipt in this study showed little variation in the services received by high-risk and moderate-risk students. Site coordinators might benefit from more guidance on assessing levels of student risk and identifying appropriate levels of service in response, in order to focus more time and energy on the most struggling students. Such service differentiation, if standardized within the Communities In Schools model, would in effect result in a three-level service model.

- The schools in this study have a range of services in place to help students be more successful, including the broadly available Level 1 services provided by Communities In Schools. In schools with many services available, it may be more challenging for Level 2 case management to make a difference above and beyond the other services that exist, including Communities In Schools' own Level 1 services. Therefore, it may be beneficial for Communities In Schools to consider where it can add the greatest value in each school building, and how that may change over time. Perhaps in schools with many services already available to students, Communities In Schools should focus their efforts on providing Level 2 case-managed services only to the students most in need and focus much less, if at all, on Level 1. In schools with relatively few school-wide supports, the organization may be able to add substantial value by having site coordinators spend more time on Level 1 services. The Communities In Schools national office may be in a position to

provide guidance to affiliates regarding how to determine an appropriate balance between Level 1 and Level 2 services so that Communities In Schools can maximize its value in each school.

Next Steps for the Study of Case Management

The research activities that are part of this study have continued, and the results from ongoing analyses will be shared in a second report. The next report will build on and complement this report in three ways:

- **Two-year impacts.** Similar student data on primary, secondary, and mediating outcomes is being collected for the 2013-2014 school year. The analysis of these data will result in two-year impact findings that better assess the effectiveness of case management, given that most students on a site coordinator's caseload receive case-managed services for more than one year. Preliminary data suggest that about two-thirds of the 2012-2013 case-managed students in our sample continued to receive case management in 2013-2014.

- **Additional implementation findings.** The second report will include more implementation information, creating an opportunity to see whether the case management experience for students changed over the course of two years. It will again include information about service provision and receipt, as well as on the contrast that case management creates in the services students receive. New implementation data were collected during the 2013-2014 school year that will make it possible to discuss how the types of services provided to students align with their specific needs. The second report will also discuss the roles of Communities In Schools' community partners and the nature of the partnerships. And to further understand the contrast that site coordinator case management might make in student service provision, the report will present more information about the work of guidance counselors and social workers, the school staff members whose work is generally most comparable to that of Communities In Schools site coordinators.

- **Variation.** Furthermore, the next report will investigate variation across school sites in terms of both implementation and impacts and the associations between the two. This analysis may generate lessons about which contexts and implementation characteristics are associated with positive impacts on student outcomes.

Taken together, the two evaluation reports will provide comprehensive information about the implementation and impact of Level 2 case management. This information will be useful to Communities In Schools and other organizations that are trying to improve student outcomes through individualized case planning intended to better connect students to support services aligned with their needs.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Every day more than 7,000 students drop out of school.[1] Among Latino and African-American boys, the dropout rates are 42 percent and 48 percent, respectively.[2] Even though high school graduation rates have risen this century, too many students who enter public high school (one in five) do not graduate within four years.[3] Compared with high school graduates, dropouts are more likely to live in poverty, suffer from poor health, be involved in crime, or be dependent on social services.[4] Students considered at risk of dropping out are those facing the greatest challenges to earning their diplomas and in greatest need of academic, social, and other supports to make it through high school to graduation. Support services for these students are scattered across government agencies and nonprofits in communities with low-performing schools — fragmentation that often results in students receiving specific services in isolation, limiting the potential of any service to change the course of a student who is headed toward dropping out. Within schools, teachers and principals are often overwhelmed by the emotional, social, and personal issues facing students. Integrating student support services (that is, connecting community agencies and organizations with schools and coordinating the services provided to students) is viewed as a promising approach to provide necessary assistance to school staff members and help keep students on track to graduate.[5]

The Communities In Schools Model of Integrated Student Supports

Communities In Schools provides an integrated student support model to schools and communities. Founded in 1977 by children's advocate Bill Milliken, Communities In Schools works with low-income students at risk of failing or dropping out of the nation's poorest-performing schools. The organization has extensive national reach and now serves more than 1.3 million students and their families.[6] It is active in over 2,000 school sites, and the national office oversees 17 state offices, as well as a network of nearly 200 local affiliates (independent nonprofit organizations) in 26 states and the District of Columbia.[7] The national office is

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[1]Swanson (2010).
[2]Schott Foundation for Public Education (2012).
[3]Murnane (2013); Stetser and Stillwell (2014).
[4]Child Trends (2014).
[5]Moore et al. (2014).
[6]Communities In Schools (2014).
[7]Communities In Schools (2014).

responsible for developing and enhancing the Communities In School model; communicating with national audiences, including advocating for education reform inclusive of integrated student services; fostering collaboration across the network; supporting research and evaluation of the model; and establishing national partnerships intended to generate resources and funding for members of the network. The local affiliates, each of which has a board of directors, oversee the implementation of the model in schools by site coordinators and build community partnerships, developing local funding and resources to support the program.[8]

Communities In Schools has created a comprehensive service model that seeks to reduce dropout rates by integrating community-based supports within schools through both preventive "Level 1" services, which are available to all students in the school, and intensive, targeted, and sustained "Level 2" services for students who are displaying one or more significant risk factors, such as poor academic performance, a high absentee rate, or behavioral problems. The implementation of Level 1 and Level 2 services at a school is led by a Communities In Schools site coordinator, sometimes assisted by additional Communities In Schools staff members as case managers.[9] The site coordinator engages in yearly school-level needs assessments and planning with school leadership, teachers, and other members of the staff. The differences between the two service levels can be described in terms of accessibility and duration or intensity. Level 1 services are broadly accessible and usually consist of short-term, low-intensity activities or assistance that students usually pursue voluntarily (for example, making clothing or school supplies available to students and hosting school-wide events).[10] They also include short-term "crisis" interventions when an extreme event disrupts a student's life (for example, finding a solution if the power is turned off at the student's home or providing short-term counseling in response to a traumatic event). Level 2 services are targeted for specific students and are typically longer term and high intensity, delivered through a case management process that includes individualized assessments, goals, and plans. This process is managed by Communities In Schools school-based site coordinators, who seek to connect the students on their caseloads with services that address the specific challenges that each one faces.

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[8]ICF International (2010).

[9]This report refers to the Communities In Schools staff members who provide case management as "site coordinators," but their actual titles vary across schools. They may be known as case managers, success coordinators, program managers, or support specialists, or by other titles.

[10]While Level 1 services are school-wide, some are not truly available to all students because they target a broad subgroup, such as a college financial aid application workshop open only to twelfth-graders. Also, although discussed here primarily in terms of student services, Level 1 may also include services for parents. These are intended to strengthen students' home supports and to more fully engage parents in order to improve overall school climate.

Communities In Schools Case Management

The focus of this report and the evaluation study discussed herein is the Level 2 case management component of the Communities In Schools comprehensive model of integrated student supports, as implemented at both the middle school and high school levels.[11] The ultimate goal of case management is to support students at risk of dropping out of high school. These risks emerge as early as the sixth grade, creating a need to serve students starting at least in middle school.[12]

While the specifics of how site coordinators manage student cases are discussed in detail in Chapter 3, this section presents a model for how case management is expected to influence student outcomes. Figure 1.1 is a visual representation of this case management logic model. The "Context/Resources" column in the figure shows the kinds of resources and contextual factors that support or influence the case management work. For example, available financial resources and the number of students in a school influence how many site coordinators might be assigned there. And site coordinators look to the community's existing organizations that provide youth services (such as counseling, recreation, or jobs) to build partnerships and foster student opportunities.

The second column, labeled "Activities," outlines case management itself. The site coordinator identifies a student as potentially at risk for eventually dropping out, through a review of data or a referral from another adult in the school, and begins the process of adding the student to his or her caseload, first seeking consent from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for the student to receive case-managed services. The site coordinator assesses the student's needs, develops an individualized case plan, and sets goals with the student, then provides or connects the student to the appropriate services. During the year, the site coordinator monitors student progress and adjusts the plan as necessary as the student's needs change. Each step of this process is described in further detail in Chapter 3.

Case management activities are expected to affect "Mediators" (the third column in Figure 1.1) related to students' attitudes, behaviors, and relationships. The services provided to a case-managed student are intended to help foster supportive relationships with adults and peers, encourage greater engagement with school, stimulate greater effort to meet academic and behavioral expectations, and increase the value that the student sees in his or her secondary schooling. Impacts on these mediating outcomes are expected to lead eventually to changes in

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[11]The comprehensive Communities In Schools model is implemented across grades K-12, in elementary, middle, and high schools. This evaluation of case management focuses only on secondary schools.

[12]Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007).

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Figure 1.1

Communities In Schools (CIS) Case Management Logic Model

Context/Resources	Activities	Mediators	Outcomes

Context/Resources

CIS Staff
- Site coordinators
- Affiliate program directors
- Other staff/volunteers

School Staff
- Teachers
- Counselors/student services
- Principals and assistant principals

School Structures
- Facilities
- Scheduling/time

Existing Services
- School
- Community

Funding
- School and district
- Local foundations and community organizations
- CIS state/CIS national
- Other

Data
- School and district characteristics
- School needs
- Student characteristics
- Student needs

Activities

1. At-risk student identified for case management

2. Assessment completed to identify specific needs

3. Case plan developed, includes services prescribed to address student needs

4. Student receives services that fall into eight categories:
   - **Academic services**
   - **Behavior services**
   - **Attendance services**
   - **Social/life skills services**
   - **Basic needs/resources**
   - **College/career preparation**
   - **Enrichment/motivation**
   - **Family-related services**

   Service providers vary from school to school, but may include CIS site staff, a school staff member, and/or someone from outside the school, either a volunteer or a paid service provider

5. CIS site staff monitor and adjust services based on student needs

Mediators

Student connection to caring adult

School engagement

Attitudes about education

Educational self-perception

Outcomes

Primary

- Decreased dropout (decreased chronic absenteeism)

- Increased high school graduation (reduced course failure)

Secondary

- Increased credit accumulation

- Improved attendance

- Decreased behavioral infractions

- Improved academic performance

4

traditional student performance measures such as attendance, performance in class, and behavior in school that requires a disciplinary response, as listed in the final column, "Outcomes."

Evaluating the Communities In Schools Integrated Student Services Model

In its ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, the Communities In Schools national office looks to external organizations to provide independent and objective research intended to help its staff understand how its model is being implemented in schools and what its impact is on schools and students. The national office, with funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, previously commissioned ICF International to conduct a five-year evaluation of its comprehensive model and the case management component.[13] The findings from that evaluation suggested that young people who receive Communities In Schools services are more likely to achieve a number of positive outcomes than those who do not.[14] Seeking to strengthen this evidence base, Communities In Schools welcomed further external evaluation of its comprehensive model and the case management component.[15] Accordingly, MDRC, a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization, is conducting an independent, two-study evaluation of Communities In Schools. This evaluation is supported primarily by the federal Social Innovation Fund (SIF). (See Box 1.1 for details about the SIF.)

This report is the first of two reports planned for a study of the implementation and impact of Communities In Schools case management. This study relies on a random assignment research design, often referred to as the "gold standard" of evaluation designs. Random assignment is a lottery-like process by which individuals are assigned either to participate in a specific program or else to continue with whatever the "business as usual" alternative(s) might be. In cases where there are more individuals interested in and eligible for the program than there are available slots, this process provides a fair way to determine who participates in the program and also creates conditions for two equivalent groups. That is, the characteristics of individuals assigned to participate in the program should be the same as those of the individuals assigned to continue with business as usual. By comparing the outcomes of these groups, it is possible to

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[13]ICF International (2010); Porowski and Passa (2011).

[14]Porowski and Passa (2011).

[15]The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF) received a Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant from the federal Corporation for National and Community Service. Communities In Schools is a subgrantee to EMCF within the SIF program. Thus, while Communities In Schools was interested in ongoing evaluation, this evaluation is being conducted as one of the required activities of the SIF grant program. It also aligns with EMCF's interest in supporting organizations that are participating in evidence-generating research. In addition, this evaluation is supported by funds from the Wallace Foundation.

Box 1.1

The EMCF Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF), an initiative enacted under the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, targets millions of dollars in public-private funds to expand effective solutions across three issue areas: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development and school support. This work seeks to create a catalog of proven approaches that can be replicated in communities across the country. The SIF generates a 3:1 private-public match, sets a high standard for evidence, empowers communities to identify and drive solutions to address social problems, and creates an incentive for grant-making organizations to target funding more effectively to promising programs. Administered by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the SIF is part of the government's broader agenda to redefine how evidence, innovation, service, and public-private cooperation can be used to tackle urgent social challenges.

The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation (EMCF), in collaboration with MDRC and The Bridgespan Group, is leading a SIF project that aims to expand the pool of organizations with proven programs that can help low-income young people make the transition to productive adulthood. The project is particularly focused on young people who are at greatest risk of failing or dropping out of school or of not finding work, who are involved or likely to become involved in the foster care or juvenile justice system, or who are engaging in risky behavior such as criminal activity or teenage pregnancy.

EMCF, with its partners MDRC and Bridgespan, selected an initial cohort of nine programs and a second cohort of three programs to receive SIF grants: BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life), Center for Employment Opportunities, Children's Aid Society-Carrera Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, Children's Home Society of North Carolina, Communities In Schools, Gateway to College Network, PACE Center for Girls, Reading Partners, The SEED Foundation, WINGS for Kids, Youth Guidance, and Children's Institute, Inc. These organizations were selected through a competitive selection process based on prior evidence of impacts on economically disadvantaged young people; a track record of serving young people in communities of need; strong leadership and a potential for growth; and the financial and operational capabilities necessary to expand to a large scale.

The EMCF Social Innovation Fund initiative, called the True North Fund, includes support from CNCS and 15 private co-investors: The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, The Duke Endowment, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The JPB Foundation, George Kaiser Family Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, Open Society Foundations, The Penzance Foundation, The Samberg Family Foundation, The Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, The Starr Foundation, Tipping Point Community, The Wallace Foundation, and the Weingart Foundation.

assess the causal impact of the program, because any differences between them after random assignment can be attributed to the program.

As will be detailed later in the report, the schools included in the study serve predominantly low-income and minority students, and each had more students eligible for case management than could be served by Communities In Schools site coordinators. (Eligible students face academic, attendance, behavioral, and/or personal challenges that threaten to impede their progress toward high school graduation.) Thus students were randomly assigned to join site coordinators' caseloads (the *case-managed* group) or to continue with business as usual at their schools, with access to whatever student supports were available other than Communities In Schools case management (the *non-case-managed* group). Any differences that emerge over time between these two groups of students in their attendance, course performance, and behavior, as well as their attitudes about school and their relationships with peers and adults, can thus be attributed to Communities In Schools case management.

MDRC's evaluation also includes a complementary second study that investigates the impact of the Communities In Schools comprehensive model, inclusive of both Level 1 and Level 2 services. This second study uses a quasi-experimental comparative interrupted time series design, in which the impact of the comprehensive model is estimated by looking at student outcomes at schools before and after they implement the model and comparing them to student outcomes over the same period at a set of similar schools that are not implementing the model. The quasi-experimental study uses a different set of schools from those included in the random assignment study. The results from the quasi-experimental study will be presented in a separate evaluation report.

Learning Agenda for the Study of the Implementation and Impact of Case Management

The goals of this study are to provide evidence of the causal impact of Communities In Schools case management on student outcomes and to understand the details about how case management aims to support students and improve their school trajectories. Specifically, the random assignment evaluation design examines the incremental effect of Communities In Schools' Level 2 case management on student outcomes, particularly progress toward graduation, over and above the effect of Level 1 and other services provided to all students in the study schools. The implementation research looks at the details of the case management process, helps shed light on the impact findings, and provides useful information to Communities In Schools about the case management component of its model.

The primary focus of this first report from this multiyear evaluation is on the implementation of case management. Three of the remaining four report chapters focus on Communities

In Schools' operations and the contexts of the schools in which site coordinators work, the case management process, and how case management affects students' school experiences — in particular, what kinds of services students receive that are intended to help them succeed in school.

Since it is expected that case management may take more than one year to start having an impact on students' school outcomes, the one-year impact findings are considered interim findings. Research on other student support programs has found null or negative impacts on outcomes such as attendance, course grades, and standardized test scores after the first year of student participation, and then found positive impacts by the second or third year of support. For example, the research organization SRDC found that the AVID educational pilot project had negative impacts on attendance and course grades for ninth-grade students in British Columbia, Canada, but by eleventh grade these negative impacts had disappeared and the AVID students were doing better in their classes and taking more rigorous coursework than their peers in a control group.[16] Herrera, Grossman, and Linden reported that the Higher Achievement Program's after-school and summer programs did not affect the math and reading performance of students after one year but had statistically significant positive impacts on both subjects after the second year.[17] In addition, in their report on integrated student services, Moore et al. indicated that the effects of such services can take time to emerge.[18] Still, improvement after one year on at least some of the mediating student outcomes measured in this study would suggest possible later impacts on how students do in school. The second report from this study of case management will present more definitive two-year impact findings.

The Implementation of Case Management

The case management implementation research provides an opportunity to discuss how Communities In Schools site coordinators work with students and adults within their assigned schools. Given that the Communities In Schools model represents an effort to integrate multiple types of school and community services, it is necessary to consider the local contexts in which the model is implemented. The implementation research addresses questions related to four topics: context, model fidelity and program quality, amount and duration of services provided, and service contrast. Research questions related to each of these topics are as follows:

- **Context.** What are the circumstances under which case management is being implemented?

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[16]Dunn et al. (2010).
[17]Herrera, Grossman, and Linden (2013).
[18]Moore et al. (2014).

- **Model fidelity and program quality.** How similar is case management as implemented to the model as designed? How well does it align with the needs of students?

- **Amount and duration of services.** What services do students receive, how many times, and for how long?

- **Service contrast.** Does case management create a difference between the experiences of case-managed students and the experiences of non-case-managed students?

The Impact of Case Management

Although Communities In Schools hopes to have an impact on multiple student outcomes, the driving mission of the organization is to affect students' *school progress* — that is, to reduce the number of students who drop out and increase the number of students who graduate. During the time frame for this study, it is not possible to track all students through high school graduation. Therefore, the two key impact questions focus on *primary outcomes* that are suggestive or predictive of students dropping out: *chronic absenteeism* and *course failure in core subject areas*.[19]

Students need to attend school and pass their required courses to make progress toward graduation. Site coordinators do not provide direct content instruction, although they will connect students to academic services, such as tutoring, intended to help them learn course material. Successfully passing a course, however, requires not only that students understand the material, but also that they complete their homework, behave appropriately in class, and attend on a regular basis, all of which are targets of case management. These key questions will be examined for all students in the study (middle school and high school):

Impact questions. Does case management reduce the number of students

1. who are chronically absent (attendance below 90 percent)?

2. who fail one or more of their core academic classes?

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[19]Allensworth and Easton (2005) indicate that earning course credits and not failing core courses in ninth grade is predictive of eventual graduation, and Herlihy and Kemple (2004) and Quint (2006) discuss how crucial ninth grade is to students' progress to graduation. Balfanz, Herzog, and MacIver (2007) have also found that as early as the sixth grade, 50 percent of future school dropouts in high-poverty schools exhibit indicators of falling off track — poor attendance, poor behavior, and poor course performance (that is, course failure).

The study will also analyze the impact of case management on a few *secondary outcomes*: attendance rate, course grades, high school credit earning, and suspensions. Furthermore, the study will look at the impact of case management on the *mediating student outcomes* discussed above, such as students' relationships with peers and adults, their engagement with school, how much they value education, how they see themselves as students, and their educational goals. (See "Mediators" and "Outcomes" in Figure 1.1.)

Data Sources

This study draws upon varied quantitative and qualitative data sources to learn about the implementation of Communities In Schools case management and to analyze the impact of case management on student outcomes. These data provide information that corresponds to the categories presented in the case management logic model: context, activities, mediators, and outcomes (Figure 1.1). The first four data sources — adult surveys, in-person interviews, management information system (MIS) data, and student surveys — are all part of the implementation research.[20] Student surveys also provide information for the analysis of the impact of case management on mediating outcomes. The last data source — student records data — provides information for the analysis of the impact of Level 2 case management on the primary and secondary school outcomes.

Adult surveys. In the spring and summer of 2013, the study team administered surveys to school leaders and Communities In Schools site coordinators at the 28 participating schools.[21] The *school leader surveys* and the *site coordinator surveys* provide information about school and community context, such as what kinds of needs students had; what kinds of support programs and services were available to all students and whether they were provided by school staff members, Communities In Schools staff members or partners, or other organizations; and what issues the respondents saw as important to the school. In addition, the site coordinators reported information specific to their work with case-managed students, such as those students' needs and what services site coordinators provided to try to support them. (See "Context" and "Activities" in Figure 1.1.)

In-person interviews. Also in the spring of 2013, the study team visited 18 of the 28 school sites participating in the evaluation across all five local affiliates. The main focus of these

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[20]The full text of all MDRC surveys administered during the first year of the evaluation are included in supplementary Appendix C in Corrin et al. (2015), available on MDRC's website (www.mdrc.org).

[21]In a majority of the study schools, the school leader survey was completed by the principal or assistant principal, but some cases it was completed by another staff member identified by the principal as knowledgeable about student support services at the school (for example, the head of guidance, an academic dean, a guidance counselor, or a social worker). One school leader survey was completed per school.

visits was to conduct *in-person interviews* with Communities In Schools site coordinators, school principals, case-managed and non-case-managed students, and Communities In Schools affiliate staff members. The data collected from all of these interviews provide information about the local implementation contexts. In addition, interviews with the site coordinators gave valuable information about how they describe the process of case management and how they practice it. The interviews with the case-managed students provided some illustrative examples of how they experience case management. Through the site visits, the study team was also able to do informal observation of the schools and, in some schools, observe an activity provided or coordinated by Communities In Schools site coordinators.

Management information system (MIS) data. *MIS data* are used in the analysis of the implementation of case management to measure the amount and types of services case-managed students received. Depending on the local affiliate, these data came from Communities In Schools' national information system or from similar state or local systems. Throughout the year site coordinators enter information into these systems related to the services they provide or coordinate for individual students on their caseloads, making it possible to analyze the amount and types of services these students receive. As described in Chapter 4, the study team organized these services into eight categories: academic, behavior, attendance, social or life skills, basic needs and resources, college and career preparation, enrichment or motivation, and family-related services. (See "Activities" in Figure 1.1.)

Student surveys. Students in both study groups — case-managed and non-case-managed — responded to *baseline surveys* in the fall of 2012, before case management service provision began, and *follow-up surveys* in the spring of 2013. The baseline surveys provide information about student characteristics, such as whether older siblings graduated high school or dropped out, students' household composition, and the educational background of their parents. These data allow for additional description of the study sample and are also included in the analysis of the comparability of case-managed and non-case-managed students.[22] On the follow-up surveys, students reported on what kinds of supports they received in and out of school, allowing the study team to compare support services received by case-managed and non-case-managed students. In addition, these surveys provide information about mediating outcomes, such as the students' engagement with school, their relationships with peers and adults, and educational aspirations. (See "Mediators" in Figure 1.1.) Both the baseline and follow-up surveys make use of items from the California Healthy Kids Middle School Survey (specifically items from Module A and resilience items from Module B) with permission of the California Department of Education and WestEd.

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[22]These baseline data also provide covariates in the impact analyses of survey outcomes.

Student records data. To answer the primary and secondary research questions about the impact of case management on students' school outcomes, the study relies on *student records data* obtained from the participating school districts. These districts provided baseline data (pre-random assignment) about students for the 2011-2012 school year and follow-up data (post-random assignment) for the 2012-2013 school year. Both sets of data included information about students' attendance, course performance, and suspensions, as well as student demographic characteristics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, and English language learner status. The baseline data make it possible to describe the sample of students in the study and analyze the comparability of the case-managed students and their non-case-managed peers at the start of the study.[23] The follow-up data provide the necessary information to determine whether case management had an impact on measures related to attendance (such as chronic absenteeism and attendance rate), course performance (such as course failure, average grades, and credit earning in core courses), and behavior (such as number of suspensions). (See "Outcomes" in Figure 1.1.)

Structure of the Report

This report focuses on the implementation of case management. Thus the next three chapters cover implementation context, the case management process, and service provision. Chapter 2 describes the types of schools participating in this study and the services provided to their students. Chapter 3 takes an in-depth look at the Communities In Schools case management process, discussing how site coordinators work with students on their caseloads. Chapter 4 describes the student participants, looks at how much support case-managed students received, and also investigates whether and how case-managed and non-case-managed students differed in terms of the types and amount of support received. The final chapter goes beyond implementation, presenting interim impact findings after one year of case management. It first discusses analyses of mediating outcomes, then turns to the results of analyses of the impact on attendance, behavior, course performance, and school progress. It concludes with a few programmatic considerations for Communities In Schools and other providers of integrated student services.

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[23]In addition, because a prior measure of a later outcome is a good predictor of that outcome, the baseline data are included as covariates in the impact analyses, helping to improve the precision of the impact estimates.

Chapter 2

Study Schools' Characteristics
and Support Services

This chapter of the report includes information about the Communities In Schools affiliates and schools included in this study. It begins by detailing the study affiliate and school selection processes and describing the characteristics of the participating schools. The chapter then presents information about the support services available in the study schools and about Communities In Schools' site-level operations. This sets the stage for a detailed examination of the Communities In Schools case management process and services and an understanding of the different services received by case-managed and by non-case-managed students, which are explored in Chapters 3 and 4.

Key points from this chapter include the following:

- The study sample includes 28 schools supported by five Communities In Schools affiliates located in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas. All the study schools receive Title I funding and have many students facing challenges related to their academics, attendance, behavior, and home lives.

- At each school, one or more Communities In Schools site coordinators are responsible for all on-site operations. The site coordinators in the study had an average of more than five years of experience as site coordinators and many had or were pursuing advanced degrees in social work or counseling.

- School leaders and Communities In Schools site coordinators reported that many types of services are offered by a school's staff, Communities In Schools staff members and partners, and external partners to address students' needs. Communities In Schools appears to be an important part of the support environment in study schools, offering a variety of Level 1 services to all students and providing more intensive Level 2 case-managed services to a subset of students in each school.

Affiliates and Schools in the Study

Twenty-eight schools supported by five Communities In Schools affiliates are included in this study. To build the study sample, the MDRC research team worked with Communities In Schools' national office during the 2011-2012 school year to recruit affiliates and schools. As the first step of the recruitment process, Communities In Schools staff members identified eight

affiliates that indicated openness to participating in the national evaluation and that had been previously determined to meet national quality standards.[1]

After the national office introduced MDRC and the evaluation to these affiliates, the MDRC research team conducted introductory phone calls with each affiliate to discuss the study procedures and explain the conditions necessary for conducting a student-level random assignment study. The research team sought affiliates with multiple schools in which the Communities In Schools staff believed there were at least twice as many students in need of Level 2 case management as could be served at the school. This condition was considered necessary for study participation because MDRC would randomly assign students to either receive or not receive case management only where Communities In Schools lacked the resources to serve all the students in need. When need exceeds available resources, random assignment is a fair way to allocate those scarce resources. Thus, as part of the initial screening process, affiliates estimated the number of open slots they expected to be available for new case-managed students during the 2012-2013 school year. While site coordinators' average caseload size in the study schools was 84 students, the only slots available for random assignment would be those that would be newly open for the 2012-2013 school year (for example, spots left open by graduating eighth or twelfth graders).[2] The research team considered affiliates to be high-potential study participants if they (1) had multiple schools in which the Communities In Schools staff expected 20 or more open caseload slots, to ensure a large enough sample for the study, and (2) believed there to be twice as many students eligible for case management as could be served.

After the introductory phone calls and initial screening were completed for the eight affiliates, the research team made site visits to six high-potential affiliates and selected five to be included in the study.[3] Twenty-eight schools — 16 middle schools and 12 high schools — across the five affiliates were selected to participate in the study based on the criteria given above. One affiliate is in South Carolina, two are in North Carolina, and two are in Texas. Two

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[1]Selected affiliates had been accredited through the national Communities In Schools Total Quality System accreditation process. As part of the process, each affiliate was verified via formal review to have achieved the organization's established business and site operations standards.

[2]The site coordinators in the study reported having an average of 84 students on their caseloads, but in most school years, a relatively small percentage of students are new to case management because site coordinators continue working with many of the students they were serving the year before. For example, a high school site coordinator might be able to serve 100 students on her caseload. At the start of a given year, she might continue working with 70 of the students who were on her caseload during the previous year, while 30 of her students from the previous year might have graduated or moved to another school. In this case, she would have room for 30 new students on her caseload, so 30 study students would have been randomly assigned to this site coordinator's caseload.

[3]The sixth affiliate was not included in the study because the affiliate staff was not confident that there was oversubscription at each of the potential study schools.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 2.1

**Selected Characteristics of the Study Schools,
Schools in Study States, and the
National Population of High Schools and Middle Schools**

	Study Schools	Schools in Study States[a]	National Schools[a]
<u>High schools</u>			
School locale (%)			
Large or midsize city	63.6	12.4	18.3
Urban fringe and large town	27.3	18.0	29.9
Small town and rural area	9.1	69.6	51.7
Schools with Title I status (%)	100.0	74.8	62.6
Average school enrollment (#)	1,527	914	775
Average student enrollment (%)			
Grade 9	29.9	29.3	24.7
Grade 10	26.5	25.3	24.5
Grade 11	22.1	23.5	24.4
Grade 12	21.5	21.8	25.9
Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch (%)	59.1	50.9	44.3
Race/ethnicity of students (%)			
Black	42.1	32.4	15.0
Hispanic	37.0	8.4	20.0
White	16.2	53.5	57.1
Other	3.6	5.7	7.9
Female students (%)	48.2	49.3	48.2
Average number of full-time teachers	86	55	49
Number of schools	11	695	16,278

(continued)

affiliates are located in large cities and three are in midsize cities, though some also serve a number of suburban and rural schools in adjacent areas. These affiliates have long-standing histories working with their local districts, all five with at least ten years of operation in their communities, and most with more than twenty.

Each affiliate contributed between 2 and 13 schools and between 100 and 1,025 students to the study sample. Table 2.1 includes the characteristics of the study schools, as compared

Table 2.1 (continued)

	Study Schools	Schools in Study States[a]	National Schools[a]
Middle schools			
School locale (%)			
Large or midsize city	78.6	14.0	19.1
Urban fringe and large town	7.1	23.5	36.9
Small town and rural area	14.3	62.5	43.9
Schools with Title I status (%)	100.0	84.1	73.9
Average school enrollment (#)	737	667	625
Average student enrollment (%)			
Grade 6	34.3	33.6	32.7
Grade 7	32.6	33.3	33.5
Grade 8	33.1	33.0	33.6
Students receiving free or reduced-price lunch (%)	61.5	57.3	49.3
Race/ethnicity of students (%)			
Black	44.0	31.0	16.0
Hispanic	44.1	10.6	21.2
White	7.6	52.2	54.7
Other	4.3	6.2	8.1
Female students (%)	48.3	48.7	48.5
Average number of full-time teachers	48	42	40
Number of schools	14	630	9,981

SOURCES: 2011-2012 data obtained from the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics Common Core of Data (CCD), Public School Universe Data.

NOTES: The study includes a total of 16 middle schools and 12 high schools. Of the 16 middle schools in the study, 2 schools were excluded from analysis due to their classification as elementary schools in the 2011-2012 CCD; data for grades 6-8 were not available for these two schools. One middle school in the study serves grades 6-12. To calculate average enrollment by grade for this school, grade 9 enrollment was excluded from the denominator. Of the 12 high schools in the study, 1 high school was excluded from analysis because no CCD information was available for the school.

    Teacher counts in the CCD are reported in full-time equivalent units. This is the amount of time required to perform an assignment stated as a proportion of a full-time position. It is computed by dividing the amount of time an individual is employed by the time normally required for a full-time position. The counts were rounded to the nearest whole number.

   [a]National and study states samples include study schools.

with public schools in study states and across the country. More of the study schools are in urban areas, with more than two-thirds located in or around large or midsize cities.[4] Compared with average schools in their states and nationally, the study schools serve greater proportions of low-income and minority students; all the study schools receive funds under Title I, the federal program that supports schools that have a large proportion of disadvantaged children. On average approximately 60 percent of the students in these schools are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and nearly 85 percent are black or Hispanic students. The study high schools enroll an average of 1,527 students and the middle schools enroll an average of 737 students, compared with respective national averages of 775 and 625 students. In addition, the study high schools have lower proportions of students in upper grades compared with schools nationally, which signals higher rates of dropout.

Interviews with Communities In Schools site coordinators and school leaders in the study schools indicated that, in addition to serving large proportions of low-income and minority students, these schools have student populations with substantial academic, behavioral, and personal needs. Site coordinators and school leaders at most schools explained during interviews that numerous community and home-life challenges might hinder students' success at school to varying degrees. Primary examples of the struggles they cited include living in neighborhoods with high poverty and limited resources, having limited transportation options, living in overcrowded homes, coming from single-parent households to which students are often expected to contribute financially, and becoming parents before finishing school. One site coordinator explained the difficulties faced by students in his school:

> Obviously, we're in the inner city; there are a lot of needs for our students. Many are at risk for a bunch of different reasons. It could be gang involvement, high absenteeism, some of our students are pregnant. Just low achievement, low motivation, but at the same time there are a lot of great kids here who go on to have great success.

Similarly, many other site coordinators and school principals articulated concerns about such obstacles but also expressed optimism that, with the right support in school, many students would go on to experience college and career success.

Table 2.2 includes additional information about the problems that students in the study schools encounter. School leaders and site coordinators indicated that poor academic

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[4]A larger proportion of study schools are located in urban areas compared with other middle and high schools in Communities In Schools' national network, as well. Information provided by the Communities In Schools national office, based on 2012-2013 end-of-year reports by all local sites and affiliates except those in Texas, indicated that 38 percent of network middle schools were located in urban areas, 21 percent in suburban areas, and 41 percent in rural areas. Of high schools in the network, 53 percent were located in urban areas, 14 percent in suburban areas, and 33 percent in rural areas.

Table 2.2

Student Issues and Their Priority for School Leaders and Communities In Schools Site Coordinators

Measure	Poor Academic Performance	Poor Attendance	Behavior/ Discipline Problems	High Risk Social Behavior	Lack of Parental Involvement/ Support	Family Instability	Students at Risk of Dropping Out[a]
School leader estimate of percentage of students facing issue[b]	52.4	30.4	33.2	27.9	49.6	33.2	30.4
School leaders reporting issue is a high priority at school[c] (%)	100.0	79.2	96.0	76.2[d]	70.8	54.2	—
Site coordinator estimate of percentage of students facing issue	58.5	34.8	38.9	38.1	60.0	40.8	43.0
Site coordinators reporting issue is a high priority for CIS at school (%)	89.3	70.8	95.8	68.2[e]	52.2	56.5	—

Number of schools: school leader survey = 25;[f] site coordinator survey = 28

SOURCES: School leader survey (summer 2013), site coordinator survey (summer 2013).

NOTES: The percentages presented here include only those respondents who answered the survey item; response rates vary among items. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rates of missing responses to the school leader survey items average to 2 percent and range from 0 percent to 16 percent, while the rates of missing responses to the site coordinator survey items average to 8 percent and range from 0 percent to 19 percent. CIS = Communities In Schools.

[a]These values are calculated from an individual item on the school leader and site coordinator surveys, asking: "Of all students at your school, what percentage would you describe as being at risk of dropping out?" The percentages presented here are calculated from the mean of an 11-point answer scale, which ranges from 0 = "about 0%" to 10 = "about 100%."

[b]The percentages presented here are calculated from the mean of an 11-point answer scale, where respondents estimated the percentage of students in need at their school from 0 = "about 0%" to 10 = "about 100%."

[c]The survey item was skipped if respondents reported 0 percent of students faced the given issue, or if services relating to the issue were not offered at the school.

[d]The missing rate for this item is 16 percent.

[e]The missing rate for this item is 19 percent.

[f]Respondents at 3 of the 28 study sites did not return a survey.

performance and lack of parental involvement and support affected the greatest number of students in their schools — at least half. In addition, they estimated that nearly 30 percent or more of their students had issues with poor attendance, behavioral or discipline problems, high-risk social behavior, or family instability. All or nearly all school leaders and site coordinators indicated that poor academic performance and behavioral or discipline problems were a high priority for their schools and for Communities In Schools. As shown in the final column of Table 2.2, school leaders' and site coordinators' estimates of the percentage of students at risk of dropping out were 30 percent and 43 percent, respectively.[5]

Services Available in the Study Schools

In addition to learning about the study schools' student populations, the research team sought to learn more about the availability of support services in the schools. Overall, the information shared by school leaders and site coordinators suggests that the study schools offer a wide variety of services that aim to address students' needs.[6]

Many school administrators explained during interviews that noninstructional supports are a critical aspect of how their schools serve students, with more than one-third of principals suggesting that providing behavioral and personal supports and resources was as important as, and sometimes more important than, serving students academically. In many cases a central team, consisting of both teachers and members of the support staff (for example, guidance counselors, social workers, and in some cases Communities In Schools site coordinators), confers regularly to match various services with needs across the overall student population. Some principals explained that these core teams are important forums for teachers and support staff members to discuss students' challenges and plan appropriate support for those who struggle the most.

The site coordinator and school leader surveys suggest that many services are available in the study schools. As shown in Table 2.3, site coordinators in most study schools reported that Communities In Schools provides services to address each of the issues listed, ranging from a high of 96 percent of site coordinators reporting that Communities In Schools staff members or external partners provide services to address poor academic performance to a low of 81 percent reporting that they provide services to address family instability. (Partners are people and organizations that Communities In Schools brings into the school or works with outside of

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[5]On every one of the seven issues in the survey, site coordinators estimated a larger percentage of students affected than did school leaders.

[6]School leader and Communities In Schools site coordinator surveys were the primary data source for this information, as such data are not available consistently from the school districts participating in the study.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 2.3

Student Issues and Reported Service Providers

Issue	School Leaders Reporting Service Provider (%)			Site Coordinators Reporting Service Provider (%)		
	School Staff	CIS Staff or Partners	Other	School Staff	CIS Staff or Partners	Other
Poor academic performance	96.0	84.0	56.0	96.4	96.4	35.7
Poor attendance	92.0	92.0	44.0	77.8	88.9	3.7
Behavior/discipline problems	100.0	84.0	44.0	77.8	85.2	22.2
High-risk social behavior	100.0	80.0	40.0	65.4	92.3	30.8
Lack of parental involvement/support	92.0	80.0	44.0	65.4	88.5	23.1
Family instability	92.0	84.0	56.0	61.5	80.8	15.4
Number of schools			25[a]			28

SOURCES: School leader survey (summer 2013), site coordinator survey (summer 2013).

NOTES: The values presented here represent the percentage of school leaders or site coordinators who reported each of the given service providers, and include only those surveys in which the respondent answered the survey item. Response rates vary among services. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rate of missing responses to the school leader survey items is 0 percent. The rates of missing responses to the site coordinator survey items average to 5 percent and range from 0 to 7 percent.

[a]Respondents at 3 of the 28 study sites did not return a survey.

the school.) School leaders concurred, with at least 80 percent of leaders reporting that Communities In Schools staff members or partners provided services to address each of the issues. This suggests that school leaders view Communities In Schools as an active collaborator in addressing the needs of their school populations.[7]

While they were not asked about which school staff members provided each of the services, school leaders did provide information about support staff positions in their schools. Nearly all (96 percent) school leaders reported having guidance counselors, 64 percent reported

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[7]While nearly all school leaders indicated that school staff members provide services to address each of these issues, site coordinators did not always agree. Almost all site coordinators indicated that school staff members provided services to address poor academic performance, but they were less likely to say so about the other issues. Site coordinators were also less likely than school leaders to indicate that other service providers addressed students' issues.

having social workers, and 48 percent reported having other support staff members (cited examples include behavior specialist, college adviser, and parent advocate). In schools that had these support positions, school leaders indicated having an average of 2.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) guidance counselors, 1.0 FTE social worker, and 1.6 FTE other support staff members. Across all the schools in the sample, the average number of support staff members was 4.2 FTEs, which did not include the Communities In Schools site staff. These school support staff members had large caseloads: guidance counselors, social workers, and other support staff members averaged 296 students, 419 students, and 257 students per FTE, respectively, according to school leaders.

Table 2.4 details the types of support services school leaders reported being available in their schools, with their estimates of the percentage of students receiving each type of service, service frequency, whether each service is available to all, and whether Communities In Schools is a key provider. At least 80 percent of leaders reported the following services being available in their schools: academic assistance, mentoring, meetings with adult staff members to discuss academic goals, college planning and preparation, behavior intervention, anger management or conflict resolution, linkages to basic needs and resources, and individual and school-sponsored family engagement activities. In schools where the services are offered, leaders reported that approximately half of all students receive academic assistance, college planning and preparation, and pregnancy prevention services, and more than half the students engage in meetings with adults to discuss academic goals, programs to prevent bullying and drug abuse, career development and readiness programs, and school activities or meetings with their families. In addition, many of these services are available on at least a monthly or near-weekly basis. School leaders also reported that Communities In Schools is a key provider for many of these services — most frequently for mentoring, numerous family-related services, behavior interventions, drug abuse prevention, community service activities, and linkages to basic needs and resources. In addition to their survey responses, most school leaders stated during interviews that they consider Communities In Schools to be an important part of their school's support system.

Communities In Schools' Site-Level Operations

As part of its implementation research, the study team sought to build an understanding of how Communities In Schools operates in the study schools. This section introduces details about staffing, space, and programming.

Site Coordinators and Their Workspace

Communities In Schools program implementation is led at each school by one or more site coordinators responsible for all on-site operations. Affiliate staff members determine how

Table 2.4

Student Services As Reported by School Leaders

Service	Leaders Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Estimated Percentage of Students Receiving Service[a]	Leaders Reporting Service Available to All Students (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[b]	Leaders Reporting CIS Is a Key Service Provider (%)
Academic services					
Academic assistance	92.0	47.4	95.7	34.6	52.2
Meeting with adult staff to discuss academic goals	80.0	74.0	NA	16.2	55.0
Behavior and attendance services					
Behavior intervention	80.0	35.0	NA	24.3	70.0
Anger management/Conflict resolution	80.0	26.5	NA	22.6	60.0
Truancy prevention activities	60.0	38.7	42.9	18.8	40.0
Social/life skills services					
Mentoring	84.0	23.8	47.6	21.5	81.0
Gang intervention/prevention[c]	56.0	30.0	50.0	10.6	42.9
Pregnancy prevention	40.0	49.0	30.0	17.3	40.0
Bullying prevention	72.0	73.3	83.3	18.6	61.1
Drug abuse prevention	56.0	66.4	76.9	13.1	85.7
Substance abuse support programs	44.0	27.3	NA	9.6	27.3
Pregnancy/parent support programs	44.0	22.7	NA	6.2	36.4
Programs for adjudicated youth[d]	28.0	35.7	NA	14.6	42.9
Grief support programs	56.0	16.4	NA	8.6	28.6
Programs for LGBT youth[e]	16.0	6.0	NA	9.0	20.0

(continued)

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Table 2.4 (continued)

Service	Leaders Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Estimated Percentage of Students Receiving Service[a]	Leaders Reporting Service Available to All Students (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[b]	Leaders Reporting CIS Is a Key Service Provider (%)
Basic needs/resources					
Linkages to basic needs/resources	80.0	39.0	79.0	28.3	80.0
Physical health screening	68.0	38.8	43.8	5.2	52.9
Exercise class or club/Obesity intervention and prevention	44.0	36.4	63.6	29.3	36.4
College/career preparation					
College planning and preparation	80.0	50.0	65.0	17.9	65.0
Career development/readiness programs	68.0	58.2	62.5	20.2	64.7
Job shadowing or internship	36.0	20.0	11.1	13.8	44.4
Enrichment/motivation services					
Community service/Service learning	52.0	23.8	30.8	17.2	76.9
After- or before-school programs	60.0	38.0	93.3	31.6	46.7
Family-related services					
Individual family engagement activities	80.0	65.5	94.7	11.2	80.0
Parent group meetings and input activities	76.0	52.6	94.4	9.2	89.5
School-sponsored activities for students and their families	80.0	54.5	89.5	10.2	75.0
Number of schools	25[f]				

(continued)

Table 2.4 (continued)

NOTES: The values presented in the rightmost four columns include only those surveys in which the respondent reported the service was offered at the school and answered the relevant survey item; response rates vary among items. A value of NA indicates the question was not asked for this service on the school leader survey. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rate of missing responses to the service availability item (column 3) averages to 3 percent and ranges from 0 percent to 7 percent. The rate of missing responses to the service frequency item (column 4) averages to 12 percent and ranges from 0 percent to 60 percent. The rate of missing responses to all other items is 0 percent.

[a]The percentages presented here are the mean of an 11-point scale, where respondents estimated the percentage of students in need at their school from 0 = "about 0%" to 10 = "about 100%."

[b]The values presented here are approximations of the average number of times per year the service is offered. Times per year were calculated from respondents' answers to an original four-point frequency scale, where 1 = "once or twice a year" (1.5 times per year), 2 = "less than once a month" (4.5 times per year), 3 = "1-2 times a month" (13.5 times per year), and 4 = "one or more times a week" (36 times per year).

[c]The missing rate for this service frequency item was 21 percent.

[d]The missing rate for this service frequency item was 43 percent.

[e]The missing rate for this service frequency item was 60 percent.

[f]Respondents at 3 of the 28 study sites did not return a survey.

many site coordinators to place in a school based on a variety of factors, including the size of the school, student needs, and available funding.[8] In each of the study schools, there was at least one full-time school-based Communities In Schools site coordinator, with half the study schools having two or more site coordinators.[9]

The site coordinators in these schools were relatively well experienced and well educated. In the spring of 2013, site coordinators in the study schools had an average of 5.25 years of experience working as Communities In Schools site coordinators and 3.25 years of experience in that role in their current schools. In addition, over 60 percent of the site coordinators either had or were pursuing a graduate degree, with a majority focused on social work or counseling. Across the Communities In Schools national network, site coordinators have an average of 3.15 years of experience in their role and 2.5 years of experience in their schools.[10]

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[8]In some cases, local affiliates also place other support people in schools to work with site coordinators. Some examples include AmeriCorps members and undergraduate or graduate-level student interns.

[9]Fourteen of the study schools had one site coordinator, thirteen had two site coordinators, and one had three site coordinators.

[10]This information was provided by the Communities In Schools national office, based on 2012-2013 end-of-year reports from all local sites and affiliates except those in Texas.

Schools generally provide the site coordinators with separate space to carry out program operations. In all but one of the study schools visited by the research team, they had dedicated workspace — many site coordinators had their own classroom or small building, others shared classrooms with another support person (for example, the parent coordinator), and others had small private offices near other support staff members. The Communities In Schools space in the majority of schools visited had substantial amounts of student activity, with frequent scheduled and unscheduled interactions occurring between students and Communities In Schools staff members throughout the day. When their offices were housed in somewhat disconnected areas of the schools that saw less student traffic (for example, portable buildings set back from the main school building), site coordinators seemed to experience fewer student interactions.

Communities In Schools Services

Communities In Schools site coordinators are involved in a wide variety of activities in their schools. While they report to work every day at their assigned schools and engage in yearly school-level needs assessments and planning activities with school leaders, site coordinators are employed and managed by their local Communities In Schools affiliate rather than the schools themselves. Communities In Schools staff members explained that site coordinators are provided with guidelines from the affiliate about how to do their work but have substantial autonomy for deciding how to carry out the specific tasks.

As part of the comprehensive model, Communities In Schools provides both "Level 1" services, which are available to all students in the school, and more intensive, targeted, and sustained "Level 2" case management for students who are at greater risk of not succeeding in school. While there is some variation in how site coordinators spend their time, the primary emphasis across the study sites is on Level 2 case management. Site coordinators reported spending an average of 44 percent of their time in a typical week planning for or providing Level 2 services and an additional 14 percent of their time working with or managing partners who provide Level 2 services. During a typical week, site coordinators reported spending an average of 10 percent of their time planning or providing Level 1 services and 6 percent of their time working with or managing partners who provide Level 1 services. Another 19 percent of site coordinators' time is spent working on Communities In Schools-related administrative tasks, such as record keeping and reporting. Interviews with site coordinators suggest that many of these administrative tasks involve monitoring their case-managed students, checking grades and attendance and completing progress reports. Finally, 7 percent of site coordinators' time is spent tending to other matters, including school-related tasks that are outside of their Communities In Schools responsibilities. During interviews, half of the site coordinators said that they have non-Communities In Schools duties, whether taken on voluntarily, assigned by school administrators, or requested by the school's faculty or staff.

Level 1 services. While site coordinators reported spending a majority of their time in a typical week on Level 2 case management, the Level 1 services that are broadly available to all students or to large groups of students represent an important component of the Communities In Schools model. During interviews, site coordinators reported providing numerous Level 1 services for the larger school population, including making clothing or school supplies available to students, conducting in-class presentations and workshops, leading school-wide service projects, bringing guest speakers into the school, and conducting college and career awareness activities. While site coordinators may spend comparatively less time on Level 1 events or services in a given week, some Level 1 services are set up by site coordinators near the beginning of the year and require minimal ongoing maintenance time after that (for example, partnerships with outside organizations that come in to work with students after school). In addition to one-time events like speakers or college fairs that are broadly open to students, Level 1 services include short-term counseling or "crisis management" for students with pressing needs that arise unexpectedly.

Table 2.5 includes site coordinators' reports of Level 1 activities, frequency of service provision, and the extent to which non-case-managed students use Level 1 services. At least three-quarters of the site coordinators reported offering the following Level 1 services: college preparation and career development programs, behavior interventions, bullying prevention, links to basic needs and resources, and school-sponsored activities for students and their families. Many of these services were provided frequently; site coordinators reported that half of all Level 1 services were provided at least once or twice monthly. Although mentoring and before-school or after-school programs were offered as Level 1 services in only 46 and 32 percent of study schools, respectively, those were the Level 1 services provided most frequently — on about a weekly basis — where they were available.

Finally, underscoring school leaders' indication that Communities In Schools is a key service provider in many areas, site coordinators reported that Level 1 services are used by students for whom they provide case management as well as by those who are not on their caseloads. The far right column in Table 2.5 includes an estimate of the proportion of case-managed students among those receiving Communities In Schools Level 1 services, with 0.5 representing an even split between case-managed and non-case-managed students receiving a given service. Site coordinators reported that more than two-thirds of Level 1 service types were provided to a roughly even mix of case-managed and non-case-managed students. The remaining services, although open to non-case-managed students, had higher levels of case-managed than non-case-managed student participation. This aligns with site coordinators' reports during interviews that they regularly encourage their case-managed students to participate in Level 1 activities.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 2.5

Level 1 Service Provision As Reported by Site Coordinators

Service	Site Coordinators Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[a]	Proportion of Students Receiving Services Who Are Case-Managed[b]
Academic services			
Academic assistance	60.7	27.4	0.5
Meeting with adult staff to discuss academic goals	64.3	20.3	0.7
Behavior and attendance services			
Behavior intervention	75.0	20.3	0.5
Anger management/Conflict resolution	67.9	21.4	0.5
Truancy prevention activities	39.3	15.0	0.6
Social/life skills services			
Mentoring	46.4	34.3	0.7
Gang intervention/prevention	50.0	13.4	0.5
Pregnancy prevention	42.9	22.1	0.8
Bullying prevention	75.0	9.4	0.5
Drug abuse prevention	57.1	8.2	0.6
Substance abuse support programs	39.3	6.8	0.6
Pregnancy/parent support programs	28.6	14.3	0.7
Programs for adjudicated youth	17.9	8.7	0.6
Grief support programs	32.1	8.8	0.5
Programs for LGBT youth[c]	17.9	9.9	0.3
Basic needs/resources			
Linkages to basic needs/resources	85.7	19.1	0.6
Physical health screening	35.7	9.9	0.7
Exercise class or club/Obesity intervention and prevention[c]	28.6	13.5	0.6
College/career preparation			
College planning and preparation	78.6	15.7	0.5
Career development/readiness	82.1	13.7	0.5
Job shadowing or internship	35.7	4.2	0.7
Enrichment/motivation services			
Community service/Service learning	53.6	7.4	0.7
After- or before-school programs	32.1	33.5	0.6

(continued)

Table 2.5 (continued)

Service	Site Coordinators Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[a]	Proportion of Students Receiving Services Who Are Case-Managed[b]
Family-related services			
Individual family engagement activities	60.7	7.6	0.8
Parent group meetings and input activities	67.9	7.7	0.6
School-sponsored activities for students and their families	75.0	7.3	0.5
Number of schools	28		

SOURCE: Site coordinator survey (summer 2013).

NOTES: The values presented in the final two columns include only those surveys in which respondents reported the service was offered and answered the relevant survey items; response rates vary among items. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rates of missing responses to the service frequency item (column 2) average to 1 percent and range from 0 percent to 13 percent. The rates of missing responses to the case-managed student proportion item (column 3) average to 4 percent and range from 0 percent to 25 percent.

[a]The values presented here are approximations of the average number of times per year the service is offered. Times per year were calculated from respondents' answers to an original four-point frequency scale, where 1 = "once or twice a year" (1.5 times per year), 2 = "less than once a month" (4.5 times per year), 3 = "1-2 times a month" (13.5 times per year), and 4 = "one or more times a week" (36 times per year).

[b]The values presented here are the means of a three-point scale, where 0 = "mostly non-case-managed students," 0.5 = "an even mix of case-managed and non-case-managed students," and 1 = "mostly CIS case-managed students." CIS = Communities In Schools.

[c]The missing rate for this case-managed student proportion item is 25 percent.

Level 2 case-managed services. At each school site, Communities In Schools site coordinators provide Level 2 case-managed services to a subset of students. Across the Communities In Schools national network, Level 2 case management is provided to an average of approximately 10 percent of students in a school.[11] As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, the case management process involves a series of steps aimed at providing at-risk students with individualized support to address their needs. The steps in the process include identifying students in need of case management, assessing individual students' needs, developing a case plan and providing or connecting students with services to address their needs, monitoring students' progress throughout the year, and making adjustments to services students receive, as needed, so that they continue to meet students' needs during the school year.

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[11]This information was provided by the Communities In Schools national office, based on 2012-2013 end-of-year reports from all local sites and affiliates except those in Texas.

Site coordinators do not always provide direct service to case-managed students; connecting students with supports may involve making students aware of and helping them take advantage of existing support services available to all students in the school, such as after-school tutoring offered by teachers. Additionally, site coordinators may encourage case-managed students to participate in specific Level 1 services that they offer. However, site coordinators also provide services that are available specifically for case-managed students that go above and beyond what is otherwise available to students in the school, such as site coordinator-facilitated group activities or Communities In Schools mentoring or tutoring. While other students in the school may take advantage of some of the same services, Communities In Schools case-managed students have an adult in the school who is specifically tasked with supporting their individual needs and checking on them throughout the school year.

Each site coordinator is responsible for providing Level 2 case management to a specific group of students — the coordinator's "caseload." For schools with multiple site coordinators, the division of case-managed students varies by affiliate, with some caseloads split up based on grade level, gender, or student needs (for example, one site coordinator may work primarily with pregnant and parenting students), or simply based on availability on a site coordinator's caseload (for example, one site coordinator may have had more graduating seniors leave open spots on her caseload and would, therefore, work with a greater proportion of the new students the following year).

Site coordinators in the study reported on the survey that they had an average of 84 students on their caseloads. While site coordinators in a majority of the study schools reported this size as very similar to previous years, those in one-quarter of the schools reported that it was smaller. Reported caseload sizes varied both across and within affiliates in the study, with an overall range of 28 to 215 case-managed students per coordinator and average caseloads across the five affiliates of 44, 66, 77, 92, and 130. Caseload sizes are set for each school by the affiliate; in one affiliate, caseloads are kept intentionally small, while other affiliates set higher caseload maximums when site coordinators have assistance from other adults working for Communities In Schools, such as interns or AmeriCorps staff members. The next chapter discusses further variation in case management across the affiliates participating in the study.

Summary

This chapter of the report provided information about the Communities In Schools affiliates and schools included in this study. The study schools primarily serve low-income and minority students and have many students facing challenges related to their academics, attendance, behavior, and home lives. These schools, however, seem to have fairly comprehensive student supports in place, according to Communities In Schools staff members and school leaders.

Communities In Schools appears to be an important part of the support services environment in the study schools, offering a variety of Level 1 services to all students and providing more intensive Level 2 case-managed services to an average of 10 percent of the students. While schools also had an average of more than four FTEs of other support staff (for example, guidance counselors and social workers), those school staff members had average caseloads more than three times as large as those of Communities In Schools site coordinators. This suggests that site coordinators should be able to provide more support to the students on their caseloads than other school support staff members can. Chapter 3 details site coordinators' work with case-managed students, including how they identify students, assess their needs, develop plans for support services, connect or directly provide students with services, and monitor students' progress.

Chapter 3

Implementation of Case Management

This chapter first provides a general overview of the Communities In Schools case management process, then describes each step of the process — student identification, needs assessment, case planning, service provision, and monitoring student progress and adjusting services. The subsequent discussion of the process draws on data from the school leader and site coordinator surveys, field interviews, and observations. This chapter primarily addresses the question of whether the steps of the case management process were implemented in the study schools. The research team did not develop quantitative "fidelity scores" to measure how well, or to what extent, sites implemented each step, as one important component of the Communities In Schools model is that local sites and affiliates have the freedom to adapt the model to their school contexts. The descriptions of each step of the case management process in this chapter include general themes that emerged from interview and survey data and information about variation across the study sites.

This chapter makes the following main points:

- Each step of the case management process — identification, assessment, case planning, service provision, and monitoring and adjusting — was implemented across the 18 schools that the research team visited, though the details varied across affiliates.

- Site coordinators primarily turn to administrators, teachers, and other support staff members to help identify students in need of case management and to begin to understand students' areas of need. There is variation, however, across the affiliates in how needs assessments are conducted, with some being substantially more in depth than others.

- Although all site coordinators develop case plans for and with their case-managed students, the level of detail included in the case plan and the extent to which it guides practice throughout the school year varies by affiliate and by school.

- Across schools and affiliates, the services provided for case-managed students focus primarily on academic assistance, behavior, and social skill development. Many services are provided directly by Communities In Schools staff members or associated partner organizations; school staff

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members also provide activities or supports, which the site coordinator facilitates or encourages students to participate in.

- Most site coordinators monitor case-managed students' progress by reviewing students' school records, although the frequency of these reviews varies across affiliates, and many site coordinators explained that formal adjustments to case plans may only occur periodically.

The Case Management Process

Communities In Schools site coordinators and affiliate staff members described case management as providing individualized attention and guidance to students from their program caseloads. It may include developing trusting relationships with their case-managed students, providing and connecting students with support customized to each one's needs, creating safe spaces for them to share their problems or express their views, and offering new frames of reference about the world outside of school. The majority of site coordinators and affiliate staff members also described case management as monitoring students' attendance, academic progress, and general mental and emotional health.[1]

As depicted in Figure 3.1, the steps in the case management process include identifying students in need of case management, completing assessments to identify students' needs and set goals, developing case plans to address these, connecting and/or directly providing students with case-managed services, and monitoring students' progress and adjusting services as needed. Each of these steps is discussed in turn below.

Step 1: Student Identification

The Communities In Schools case management process begins with the identification of at-risk students who would benefit from receiving additional support services. These students typically encounter multiple factors that jeopardize their ability to be in class or to perform to acceptable academic standards, making them more likely to fail or drop out. Communities In Schools targets these students to receive more personalized support from a site coordinator in order to reduce the chances of them dropping out.

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[1]In order to be consistent with terminology, a few guidelines are used to describe qualifiers that summarize the frequency of findings across the sites. Specifically, across the 18 sites that were visited, the use of "a few" pertains to 3 or 4 sites where a given finding emerged, "some" refers to 5 or 6 sites, "many" indicates 6 to 11 sites, "most" indicates 12 to 14 sites, and "almost all" pertains to 15 or more sites.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Figure 3.1

Communities In Schools Case Management Process

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│   Student identified for case       │
│   management                        │
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│   Assessment completed to identify  │
│   individual needs and set goals    │
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│   Case plan developed to address    │
│   student needs and goals           │
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│   Case-managed services provided    │
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                 │
                 ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                     │
│  Services and student progress      │
│  monitored                          │
│  Plan adjusted to meet student      │
│  needs                              │
│                                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
```
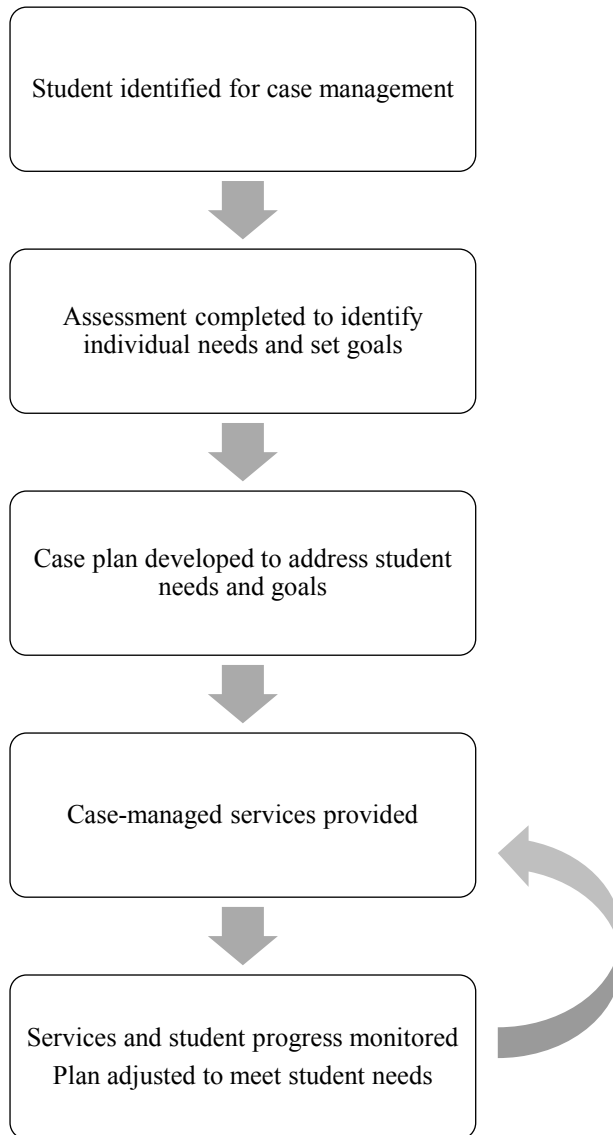
Site coordinators from the 18 schools visited described the process of identifying the students in need of case management with relative consistency, though the specific resources and personnel they used to identify these students varied. In almost all the study schools, site coordinators typically fill their caseloads through referrals and recommendations from teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, or other student support staff members on campus.[2] To encourage teachers and staff members to make these referrals, site coordinators from many schools described making presentations about Communities In Schools in student classes or during teacher meetings or trainings, as well as having individual discussions with teachers and support staff members. For instance, site coordinators from two schools explained that they schedule informational sessions during faculty meetings to provide an overview of Communities In Schools and to walk teachers through the process of referring students whom they consider to be good candidates for case management. In some cases, principals facilitate the referral process by scheduling site coordinators to address teachers during in-service training sessions at the beginning of the school year.

In addition to using teacher and staff referrals, some affiliates have their own or district-specific guidelines for identifying eligible students, which is where slight variations in the student identification process occur. One Communities In Schools affiliate, for example, has contractual agreements with such local agencies as the city housing authority, financial assistance programs, and the foster care system, which require site coordinators to enroll at least a certain number of students served by those agencies.[3] Staff members from another affiliate indicated that their school district provides a list of students considered to be "eligible" for Communities In Schools case management based on a number of at-risk factors, from which site coordinators identify candidates by reviewing attendance and grade records from the previous year(s). In some instances site coordinators revealed that students sometimes self-select into the program, mainly as a result of having heard presentations given by the site coordinators in their classes or by word of mouth from friends already enrolled in case management. Regardless of how students are initially identified as eligible, consent from a parent or legal guardian is required for all students in order to be officially enrolled on site coordinator caseloads and to start receiving Level 2 services.

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[2]This description refers to the years before the study and therefore does not include the random assignment procedure employed during the first year of the study. Please refer to the study sample description in Chapter 4 for additional details about how students were identified for case management during the study year.

[3]These agencies serve the types of at-risk students they would be likely to enroll even if these contracts were not in place.

Step 2: Needs Assessment

After identifying students to receive case management, site coordinators conduct individual assessments to learn more about their needs and to gather additional information about their backgrounds — the second step in Figure 3.1. This involves a more comprehensive review of student records and discussions with students, school staff members, and parents.

Site coordinators at almost all schools explained that they conduct a review of school records data, such as attendance records, grades, and behavioral incident records, to better understand the patterns of need for their students. In schools across three different affiliates, most mentioned also relying on teachers to learn about their students' behavior or academic progress and conducting classroom observations.

While most site coordinators also reported using standardized assessment tools designed to measure levels and areas of need, these tools varied by affiliate. For example, site coordinators from one affiliate first conduct a full psychosocial assessment of each student, which helps them pinpoint the socio-emotional conditions and the external circumstances that may affect his or her behavior. Another affiliate has coordinators complete a detailed inventory of their students' risk factors and protective factors. Site coordinators in some other affiliates, however, engage in less investigative needs assessments. Site coordinators from a few of the schools in these affiliates characterized the assessment as a more intuitive process that is mainly informed by the initial check-in meetings with their students.

Site coordinators and staff members from most affiliates mentioned the importance of communicating with family members to identify and address student issues. One affiliate places a particularly strong emphasis on actively involving the family in the needs assessment process by visiting the homes of case-managed students or meeting with parents in school, or at least connecting with parents on the phone to talk about their child's needs. All the site coordinators in this affiliate reported visiting or at least trying to visit all their case-managed students' homes. As one site coordinator explained, "I think that's really the difference in what we do . . . we go into the home and [we] meet mom or dad or grandma . . . and say 'I'm meeting you on your ground because I really want to work with [your child] and I want them to be successful.'" Other site coordinators from this affiliate suggested that reaching out to parents and family members allows them to get a better understanding of how a student's home circumstances affect their school performance or behavior.

On the survey, site coordinators shared information about the needs of their case-managed students. As shown in Table 3.1, site coordinators indicated that poor academic performance is the issue faced by the greatest proportion of case-managed students (about 60 percent). Over a quarter are assessed as having poor attendance (about 28 percent) or engaging in high-risk social behavior (about 31 percent), such as gang participation, drug use, and/or

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Table 3.1

Case-Managed Student Issues and Service Details As Reported by Site Coordinators

Measure	Poor Academic Performance	Poor Attendance	Behavior/ Discipline Problems	High-Risk Social Behavior	Lack of Parental Involvement/ Support	Family Instability
Respondents' estimate of percentage of case-managed students facing issue[a]	58.2	28.1	40.7	31.1	48.5	37.3
Site coordinators reporting most or all students in need are served (%)	78.6	70.8	91.7	72.7	65.2	60.9
Service quality rating[b]	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.6
Service provider						
School staff (%)	96.4	77.8	77.8	65.4	65.4	61.5
Communities In Schools staff or partners (%)	96.4	88.9	85.2	92.3	88.5	80.8
Other (%)	35.7	3.7	22.2	30.8	23.1	15.4
Number of schools	28					

SOURCE: Site coordinator survey (summer 2013).

NOTES: The values presented include only those surveys in which the respondent answered the survey item; response rates vary among items. Items for the second and third measure were skipped if respondents reported "about 0%" of students faced the given issue at their school, or if services relating to the issue were not offered at the school. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rates of missing responses to the above measures average to 7 percent, with a range of 0 percent to 19 percent.

[a]The percentages presented here are calculated from the mean of an 11-point answer scale, where respondents estimated the percentage of students in need at their school from 0 = "about 0%" to 10 = "about 100%."

[b]The values presented here are means on a three-point quality scale, where 0 = "Services don't address this issue, services are not appropriate for need," 0.5 = "Services partially address this issue, more support is needed," and 1 = "Services address this issue well."

sexual activity. About half of all case-managed students are considered to lack parental involvement or support, while nearly 40 percent experience family instability.

Step 3: Case Planning

Following the individual needs assessment conducted for each case-managed student, site coordinators create individual "case plans" that document each student's areas of need, goals, and service plans for the school year — the third step depicted in Figure 3.1. In almost all the schools visited, site coordinators explained that they document individualized plans for the majority, if not all, of their students when beginning case management, and in most schools these plans are part of the official case management enrollment process. On the survey, site coordinators from all schools reported developing individualized case plans that include areas of need for every case-managed student. Almost all of them also indicated that case planning involves documenting goals for the year and outlining at least one specific service that students should receive as part of case management. Most site coordinators reported that students actively participate in the development of their case plans (as opposed to having a plan pre-scribed for them), with almost all site coordinators arranging multiple meetings with the students to create and agree on goals and benchmarks for measuring their progress.

Although there appears to be consistency across the schools in documenting a case plan for students — including needs, goals, and services to be received — site coordinator and affiliate interviews suggest that there is variation in the levels of effort and detail involved. For instance, site coordinators and staff members from two affiliates described specific procedures for developing individual case plans for students, which include formulating "targeted issues" based on initial background assessments of student risk factors (in one affiliate) or actively engaging both students and parents to develop the plans in tandem with site coordinators. By contrast, site coordinators and staff members from another affiliate suggested that a case plan developed early in the year does not fully reflect the depth of a student's needs and is more of a formality than a useful document to guide student services. Some site coordinators indicated a preference for tailoring services later in the year after they know their students better. Therefore, it seems that while all site coordinators develop case plans as expected with their case-managed students, not all rely on solidifying detailed plans that will guide the provision of services throughout the year.

Step 4: Service Provision

Based on their students' needs assessments and subsequent case plans, Communities In Schools site coordinators work to provide and connect students with Level 2 services, as shown in the fourth step of Figure 3.1. Site coordinators reported on the provision of these services on surveys and also discussed these services during interviews.

Although site coordinators mentioned having assistants such as AmeriCorps members or college interns to whom they could delegate some service activities, the provision and coordination of these services were often conducted by site coordinators themselves. Site coordinators reported spending the greatest amount of their time on planning for or providing Level 2 services, as discussed in Chapter 2, and they stated during interviews that their responsibilities to their assigned case-managed students are a priority over their Level 1 duties. As shown in Table 3.1, at least 80 percent of site coordinators reported that Communities In Schools staff members or partners provide Level 2 services to address each of six categories of challenges faced by case-managed students. This table also indicates that site coordinators rely on the school's staff to provide support to case-managed students in many areas, especially those related to poor academic performance, poor attendance, and behavior or discipline problems. For example, a site coordinator may steer a case-managed student to ongoing tutoring provided by teachers within the school and then help monitor that student's participation in tutoring and academic performance.

Furthermore, Table 3.1 indicates that while site coordinators believe they are able to serve a majority of case-managed students facing particular issues, they acknowledge that there is room for improvement in the services provided and that they are not able to meet some specific needs. For example, more than 90 percent of site coordinators reported being able to serve most or all students facing behavioral challenges and indicated that the services generally address the specified issue well. However, only about 60 percent of site coordinators reported being able to serve most or all students struggling with family instability, and most indicated that more support is needed.

The site coordinator survey included detailed questions about service availability and frequency of service provision. As shown in Table 3.2, site coordinators reported a wide variety of Level 2 services. Site coordinators in almost all schools reported that the following services are available for case-managed students: academic assistance services, behavioral interventions, mentoring, links to basic needs and resources (for example, provision of food and school supplies), college planning and preparation, and family engagement activities. Of the services provided for case-managed students, academic assistance, mentoring, behavior interventions, and after-school programs are provided with the greatest frequency — at least once per week in a majority of the schools.

In addition to providing information about Level 2 services on the survey, site coordinators also discussed the details of case-managed service provision during interviews. In talking about the work they do with case-managed students, site coordinators commonly discussed three categories of services: academic, behavior and attendance, and social or life skills. It is important to note that neither site coordinators nor affiliate staff members considered these

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Table 3.2

**Frequency of Case-Managed Service Provision
As Reported by Site Coordinators**

Service	Site Coordinators Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[a]
Academic services		
Academic assistance[b]	96.4	30.2
Meeting with adult staff to discuss academic goals	96.4	18.7
Behavior and attendance services		
Behavior intervention[b]	89.3	26.3
Anger management/Conflict resolution[b]	85.7	25.9
Truancy prevention activities	67.9	20.0
Social/life skills services		
Mentoring[b]	89.3	31.3
Gang intervention/prevention	64.3	16.2
Pregnancy prevention	64.3	18.6
Bullying prevention	85.7	13.1
Drug abuse prevention	67.9	16.0
Substance abuse support programs[c]	53.6	21.0
Pregnancy/parent support programs	50.0	20.7
Programs for adjudicated youth[d]	39.3	16.3
Grief support programs	57.1	15.1
Programs for LGBT youth[e]	28.6	6.0
Basic needs/resources		
Linkages to basic needs/resources	100.0	16.2
Physical health screening	50.0	5.8
Exercise class or club/Obesity intervention and prevention[b]	42.9	22.6
College/career preparation		
College planning and preparation	92.9	15.8
Career development/readiness programs	85.7	15.8
Job shadowing or internship	67.9	7.3
Enrichment/motivation services		
Community service/Service learning	82.1	8.3
After- or before-school programs[b,f]	64.3	29.9

(continued)

Table 3.2 (continued)

Service	Site Coordinators Reporting Service Is Offered (%)	Average Yearly Service Frequency[a]
Family-related services		
Individual family engagement activities	100.0	7.4
Parent group meetings and input activities	71.4	6.1
School-sponsored activities for students and their families	82.1	8.5
Number of schools	28	

SOURCES: Site coordinator survey (summer 2013).

NOTES: The percentages presented in the service frequency column include only those surveys in which the respondent reported that the service is offered at the school and answered the survey item related to service frequency. Response rates vary among services. Missing values were excluded from calculations. The rate of missing responses to the service frequency item average to 5 percent, with a range of 0 percent to 27 percent.

[a]The values presented here are approximations of the average number of times per year the service is offered. Times per year were calculated from respondents' answers to an original four-point frequency scale, where 1 = "once or twice a year" (1.5 times per year), 2 = "less than once a month" (4.5 times per year), 3 = "1-2 times a month" (13.5 times per year), and 4 = "one or more times a week" (36 times per year).

[b]Of the site coordinators who reported that this service is offered, more than 50 percent reported that this service is offered one or more times per week.

[c]The missing rate for this service frequency item is 27 percent.

[d]The missing rate for this service frequency item is 18 percent.

[e]The missing rate for this service frequency item is 25 percent.

[f]The missing rate for this service frequency item is 17 percent.

service categories to be mutually exclusive. Because students often face many different types of challenges (for example, some site coordinators explained how poor attendance or poor academic performance can be tied to struggles with problems at home or with peers), services may simultaneously address academic, behavioral, and socio-emotional needs. Thus the goal of connecting case-managed students with mentors might be to help their behavioral and personal development as well as to make them feel someone is holding them accountable for their school assignments. Specific *types* of services within the three categories most commonly discussed by site coordinators during interviews are described in more detail below.

Academic Services

Site coordinators' descriptions of Level 2 academic services corroborated their survey responses, indicating that they were among the most frequently provided services to case-managed students. The types of academic services that site coordinators provide include homework assistance, study skill development, and working with teachers to address students'

performance in class. While a high percentage of site coordinators reported that academic assistance is a key service they provide to case-managed students, only a minority of site coordinators from the visited schools described regularly reviewing course content or providing homework assistance directly to their case-managed students. Site coordinators in two affiliates specifically stressed their belief that it was important that they not be viewed by the school's staff as academic tutors, teachers, or staff members who could be tasked by school administrators to perform academic instruction, such as filling in as substitute teachers. Instead, some site coordinators explained that they provide cocurricular services that allow a student to attend class regularly and focus on learning. As one affiliate representative noted, "I have mixed emotions about academic enhancement. I think we should be monitoring grades . . . helping when we have tutors. We are not teachers. We're not the ones that should be an expert on how to get a kid to pass math class or physics." Echoing this sentiment, many site coordinators explained that they view their academic support role to be about connecting their students to tutors, encouraging students to attend regular tutoring sessions held by their teachers, and/or working with teachers to understand where students are struggling in class. This may be the reason why site coordinators from almost all schools reported that school staff members provide services to address poor academic performance, as shown in Table 3.1. A few also described serving as a buffer between case-managed students and their teachers if and when conflicts arose regarding students' in-class performance.

Behavior and Attendance Services

Another common area of service described by site coordinators and affiliate staff members included supporting case-managed students' behavioral development. This category of Level 2 services includes such activities as offering guidance about improving conduct with peers and teachers, providing ongoing intervention when more serious behavioral or disciplinary problems occur, and encouraging case-managed students to develop better habits for attending school and classes more consistently. Site coordinators from a large majority of schools said that they regularly address behavioral or disciplinary issues that their case-managed students experience during or out of class, statements supported by survey results presented in Table 3.1.

Moreover, a few site coordinators also noted the importance of establishing relationships with their students to help them model positive behaviors, both in and out of school. As one coordinator said, "It's a program that is helping our students to be successful in life . . . to be productive citizens in society. We're trying to instill in them something that will help them make the right decisions. We're trying to plant seeds." Site coordinators also mentioned the emphasis they place on modeling appropriate conduct and explaining its importance to students during their individual check-in sessions. There is variation by school and affiliate in the extent to which the site coordinators directly provide behavior-related services themselves and the

extent to which they connect students with existing services in their schools, with nearly 80 percent of site coordinators reporting that they rely to some degree on the school staff to provide services that address attendance and behavior issues (as shown in Table 3.1).

Social or Life Skills

In addition to academic and behavioral services, Communities In Schools supports case-managed students' social development. As displayed in Table 3.1, nearly three-quarters of site coordinators surveyed say they provide social or life skills services to most or all of their case-managed students who are engaged in high-risk social behavior. Site coordinators, affiliate staff members, and principals from many schools mentioned that a primary task site coordinators take on is to meet regularly with case-managed students in order to monitor their mental and emotional well-being. The goals of establishing one-on-one relationships between site coordinators (or their designees, such as AmeriCorps members, mentors, or interns) and students include offering continuous, individualized interactions and support, creating safe spaces for students to express themselves, and offering students new frames of reference about the world outside of school. The majority of this is done through regular check-in sessions. One site coordinator explained that part of her role in supporting students is about "following up with the student, making sure that the student is doing well, and letting them know that the support is there, the encouragement is there all the time." The majority of site coordinators suggested during interviews that working through students' individual personal and socio-emotional challenges involves making time for multiple one-to-one counseling sessions during the year.

In addition, site coordinators discussed the importance of mentors and other volunteers in supporting case-managed students' social development. Some affiliates have established partnerships with local churches and volunteer agencies that provide mentorship for students, while another affiliate has site coordinators connect case-managed students to service learning and volunteer opportunities around their local communities. Staff members from one affiliate explained that the community partnerships provide additional guidance and resources for site coordinators to reinforce positive behavior and life skills, including healthy living habits, and to teach students about domestic violence issues and prevention.

Finally, site coordinators at most schools support students' social and emotional development through the facilitation of weekly or biweekly topical discussion groups. While the large majority of site coordinators reported facilitating these regular groups, the topics or themes vary. For instance, site coordinators from one affiliate run two separate groups for case-managed students, separated by gender, using curricula with gender-specific discussion topics. In other affiliates, the case-managed groups are mixed gender. Some affiliates focus their groups on teaching and discussing "life skills" with students, which can include establishing

healthy relationships and social habits (such as hygiene and diet), while site coordinators from other affiliates focus their case-managed student groups on college preparation or career exploration activities. And some affiliates and schools provide multiple groups, spread across different parts of the school year, in order to cover a range of topics for their students.

Step 5: Monitoring and Adjusting Services

The final step of the case management process involves monitoring student progress and adjusting the services that students receive. As depicted in Figure 3.1, these two steps in the process are cyclical, as they may take place numerous times throughout the school year.

Site coordinators in all schools reported on the survey that they can access student data and that they use it for tracking student progress during the year. Site coordinators in almost all schools visited told of such monitoring, primarily checking grades and attendance and writing progress reports about their case-managed students at least quarterly. Approximately three-quarters of the site coordinators reported being able to access student data in "real time," while some site coordinators are able to access students' records only at the end of each marking period. In addition to looking at student records, site coordinators at many of the schools discussed specifically monitoring progress against the goals they set with their case-managed students at the beginning of the year.

While all site coordinators reported monitoring student progress during the school year, affiliates have developed different guidelines for this step. For example, one affiliate requires that site coordinators monitor students' grades, attendance, and behavior referrals at least every six weeks and rate students' progress in specific areas of need, using a numerical scale to indicate whether students are improving, declining, or staying the same. In another affiliate, site coordinators are required to report progress only once a semester for most case-managed students but more often for students with consistently low grades. In addition, that affiliate's staff members explained that they monitor 10 percent of the case files to periodically check the sufficiency of service receipt and that their system flags students who are not getting services in the areas they are supposed to. In a third affiliate, site coordinators monitor student attendance on a weekly basis, regularly following up with students who are absent from school.

In almost all schools visited, site coordinators discussed the need to monitor their students' progress throughout the semester, and many mentioned making informal changes to the services students receive during the school year. Only a few site coordinators, however, explicitly stated that they make formal changes to students' case plans based on student progress reviews or on observed changes in students' needs. Moreover, few site coordinators were specific in their approaches to modifying goals or services listed on a student's case plan. Staff members from many schools mentioned the expectations for site coordinators to revisit early goals to see how well students were progressing, but it was unclear whether and

how site coordinators were being held accountable for this task, or how often coordinators typically reexamined and adjusted initial case plans throughout the year.

Summary and Discussion

In general, interviews with Communities In Schools staff members suggest that the case management process is being implemented with fidelity across the 18 schools that were visited — that is, the site coordinators seem to be following each step of the case management process: identifying students in need of case management at their schools; assessing their needs; developing case plans; working to help them stay on course academically and behaviorally, both through individual check-ins and through groups; and monitoring student progress. A closer look at how these steps are implemented, however, suggests that the approaches vary across affiliates. This variance especially exists in approaches to assessing student needs, to the development of case plans, and to the regularity of monitoring needs and adjusting case plans over time. Thus, while each step of the case management process appears to be implemented at all schools, affiliate-level guidelines are the likely reason for differences in the way site coordinators are implementing the steps.

As discussed earlier, the Communities In Schools national office does not impose guidelines for the execution of the steps in the case management process, and thus each affiliate has flexibility to adjust the model to fit its local context. Considering the differences in school contexts, in terms of site coordinator backgrounds, principal leadership practices, availability of other support services, school culture, and other factors, it is easy to see why so much variation in implementing the program model may exist. Given these opportunities for variation, it is noteworthy that the steps in the case management process are in place across all the participating sites in the study.

Nonetheless, while the variation is understandable, the data collected by the research team suggest some questions that Communities In Schools may want to consider regarding how case management is implemented across schools and affiliates — specifically, whether suggesting some standard practices in how needs are assessed and how case plans are used might lead to more consistency by site coordinators in the identification of student needs and thus to the prescription of services better targeted to those needs. Another consideration is the cyclical nature of the final steps of the case management process — monitoring student progress and adjusting services as needed. It is not clear how much service or case plan adjustment happens as a result of this monitoring. Given that one site coordinator indicated that it can be difficult to establish a satisfactory case plan at the start of the year, one might think this would be an important component of case management, but it is not certain whether this is so. This is one area that will be explored in greater detail in the next report from this evaluation.

Finally, one outstanding question regarding service provision relates to the quality of the services themselves. Given their many responsibilities, it is not clear whether site coordinators have the time to assess whether all the services being provided to case-managed students are of high quality. Further, site coordinators indicated on the survey that they are not always able to provide services to all or most students facing a given issue (especially if the need may fall beyond their typical scope of service provision, such as handling family instability issues). Their survey responses also indicated that more support is needed to fully address students' needs. The provision of additional staff members or resources would probably help site coordinators in their service provision and monitoring tasks, but additional resources are often unavailable, and additional staff members would require greater organization of their work. Another option in sites where site coordinators' efforts may be spread too thin would be to focus even more intensively on a smaller group of students so that those who do end up on site coordinators' caseloads receive more robust case management. In addition, a better understanding is required about how the responsibilities and actions of the site coordinator overlap with those of other staff members in the school (for example, counselors, social workers, and volunteers) and the extent to which other school staff members collaborate with site coordinators to provide case-managed services. The next report will further explore these questions across schools and affiliates.

In Chapter 4, the focus of the report shifts from the *provision* or *availability* of services to students to the *receipt* of services by students. The chapter discusses the kinds of students recruited for case management and for the study and details the random assignment process. It then provides data on the services actually received by the case-managed students, critical for understanding what case-managed study students experience as part of the program, and examines differences in the services received by case-managed students and by students not receiving case management. If such differences are negligible, it is less likely that the two groups will diverge in outcomes such as attendance, behavior, and course performance.

Chapter 4

Study Students and Support Services Received

This chapter focuses on the students who participated in the study and the support services they received during the 2012-2013 school year. While the previous chapters discuss the schools in which Communities In Schools operates and provide details about each step of the case management process, this chapter discusses the recruitment of students for case management and the study and the process used to randomly assign students to receive case management or not, which allows for a rigorous test of its impact. The chapter also examines the actual experiences of Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed students and the students in the comparison group. It uses data from school records, student surveys, Communities In Schools management information systems, and interviews conducted during site visits to describe the students in the study, the level of case-managed services students received, and the differences between case-managed and non-case-managed students' reports of in-school supports. In addition, it includes an investigation of whether the highest-risk students (that is, those with a recent history of course failures, suspensions, and very poor attendance) received different or more services compared with moderate-risk students.

This information is critical for understanding what case-managed study students experienced as part of the program. Further, investigating case-managed and non-case-managed students' reports of service receipt helps highlight the difference between case management and "business as usual" for similar students in the study schools. If it does not appear that Communities In Schools Level 2 case management provides students with support that goes above and beyond what students otherwise experience in the school, it would be less likely that differences would emerge between these two groups on the outcomes of interest.

The highlights from this chapter include the following:

- Random assignment was used to determine which students would receive Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services. Across the study schools, a total of 2,230 eligible students were included in the study, with even proportions of students assigned either to receive Level 2 case-managed services or not to receive case-managed services. Random assignment resulted in two comparable groups of students with similar baseline characteristics.

- Students in the Communities In Schools case-managed group received an average of 19.4 service contacts during the year, which amounted to an average of 16.2 total Level 2 service hours. There was substantial variation in

service receipt among case-managed students, with some students receiving very low levels of services and others receiving high levels.

- When compared with non-case-managed students, Communities In Schools case-managed students generally reported participating in support activities more frequently. Specifically, case-managed students were significantly more likely to report participating in individual and group meetings with adults in school, meeting with a mentor, participating in community service, and participating in positive behavior programs. Nonetheless, it is unclear whether the magnitude of differences is great enough to affect student outcomes.

- While there was a small amount of differentiation in the services Communities In Schools provided to high- and moderate-risk students, high-risk case-managed students did not receive a greater number of hours or service contacts than moderate-risk students. If high-risk students, who are more likely to drop out of school, need more support than moderate-risk students, the provision of Level 2 services may need to be weighted more toward this group.

Student Sample

The schools included in this study serve students facing many challenges that may hinder their progress in school, but they also have numerous support services available (see Chapter 2 for additional details). Nonetheless, during site visit interviews and other visits before the study began, Communities In Schools and school staff members emphasized that a large proportion of the students in their schools were in need of the kind of supplementary support provided to Level 2 case-managed students. Given that Communities In Schools did not have the resources to support enough site coordinators to serve all the students in need in the study schools, students were assigned at random to either receive or not receive case management. This section includes details about the random assignment process, as well as descriptive information about the students in the study sample.

Recruitment and Random Assignment

After schools were selected for the study, the research team worked with Communities In Schools affiliates and site staff members to plan for student recruitment. Students are typically identified for Communities In Schools case management through referrals and recommendations from teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, or other student support staff members on campus. This identification process often delays the filling of caseloads until the second

semester. In order to enroll students in case management early in the school year, the research team assisted affiliates in working with their local school districts to collect data to preidentify students who would be eligible, based on whether the data indicated such issues as course failures, low grade point averages, poor attendance, or behavioral infractions. While using school records was standard practice for a few study schools, whose district provides Communities In Schools with a list of at-risk students they may work with each year, it was new for most schools and affiliates in the study. Students were also considered to be eligible for case management if they were identified through one of the more typical pathways — being referred to Communities In Schools by a school staff member or parent due to a recognized need (for example, academic, attendance, behavioral, or other personal or social difficulties) or identified directly by a Communities In Schools site coordinator (see Chapter 3 for additional details on student identification).

As part of the student recruitment process, Communities In Schools affiliate and site staff members provided eligible students with information about Communities In Schools and the study. At each school, students who returned both the Communities In Schools and study consent forms were entered into MDRC's random assignment database.[1] Students were included in the random assignment database regardless of whether their parent declined or consented to study participation, as service receipt was not contingent upon affirmative study consent. With the use of random assignment, every student eligible for case management (that is, students with consent to participate and demonstrated need for support) at each school had the same chance to be served. MDRC conducted random assignment lotteries for each school site to determine which students would fill the available Communities In Schools case management slots (the case-managed group) and which students would constitute a comparison group and continue with the standard services and supports otherwise available to them at their schools (the non-case-managed group).[2]

Although the recruitment and random assignment process was different from the typical recruitment process, involving additional effort at the start of the year, interviewed site coordinators generally reported that the students who were randomly assigned to their caseloads were similar to the nonstudy students on their caseloads and to students served in previous years. In five schools, site coordinators reported that a small number of students who were identified for case management using school records data performed at a higher level than they expected. For example, a student who failed a core course in the previous year might have been invited to

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[1]These forms had to be signed by a parent or legal guardian unless the student was already an adult (18 years old).

[2]In some schools, two lotteries were performed once a critical mass of students had been recruited so that the Communities In Schools staff could enroll students assigned to the case-managed group before reaching their school's recruitment target. This occurred at 7 of the 28 schools in the study.

enter the lottery for case management based on the school record, but if the failure was an anomaly for that student, a site coordinator might find that he or she faced fewer challenges or had fewer needs than a typical case-managed student. On the other hand, Communities In Schools staff members also expressed a belief that using school records data to recruit students for the study helped identify some students for case management who might otherwise have fallen through the cracks.

Baseline Student Characteristics

The total study sample includes 2,230 students — 1,254 middle school students and 976 high school students. This includes all students who were randomly assigned to the case-managed and non-case-managed groups who were enrolled at the time of random assignment and whose parents consented to their being part of the study.[3] The random assignment ratio was approximately 1:1, with 1,140 students assigned to the case-managed (program) group and 1,090 assigned to the non-case-managed (comparison) group.

This report discusses two separate samples of students who were included in subsequent analyses. The *school records analysis sample* includes a total of 2,048 students, or 91.8 percent of the total study sample. Students were excluded from this analysis sample if their course failure information was missing, course failure being one of the two primary outcomes for the study. In addition, students from the affiliate that contributed the smallest sample are excluded from this sample due to problems with acquiring school records data. The second sample is the *student survey analysis sample*, which includes a total of 2,093 students, or 93.9 percent of the total study sample. Students were included in this analysis sample if they responded to the spring 2013 student survey, regardless of whether school records were available for them.[4]

An examination of the student records analysis sample revealed that there were no significant differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups at baseline (that is, at the start of the study before the case-managed students began to receive Communities In Schools case-managed services) in students' demographic characteristics or outcomes of

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[3]A total of 2,297 students were randomly assigned to these groups, but 56 students' parents did not consent to study participation. Also, district records show that 11 students exited their schools between turning in their consent form and random assignment, a fact not known to the research team until after random assignment was conducted. These 67 students have been excluded from the research sample. An additional 281 students, an average of 10 per school, were randomly assigned to an ordered nonresearch waiting list group, which was established at each school to create a list of students who would receive services if additional case management slots became available.

[4]A total of 1,977 students, or 88.7 percent of the total study sample, are included in both analysis samples. See Appendix B for additional sample details.

Table 4.1

**Baseline Characteristics of Students in the
School Records Analysis Sample**

Baseline Characteristic (%)	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Difference
Race/ethnicity				0.198
Hispanic	60.6	59.7	0.8	
Black, non-Hispanic	35.1	33.7	1.4	
White, non-Hispanic	1.8	3.1	-1.3	
Asian	1.4	2.0	-0.7	
Other	0.9	1.3	-0.4	
Male	44.3	44.5	-0.2	0.934
Eligible for free/reduced-price lunch[a]	53.9	51.0	2.8 **	0.045
English as a second language	12.0	11.4	0.6	0.667
Student qualifies for gifted program	2.7	3.6	-0.8	0.271
Chronically absent	9.4	8.6	0.8	0.549
Average attendance rate	95.8	95.8	0.0	0.989
Failed at least one core course	25.7	26.2	-0.5	0.786
Average core course marks	80.1	80.4	-0.2	0.493
Joint test of difference between groups[b]	(χ^2 = 14.7)			0.876
Sample size[c] (N=2,048)	1,029	1,019		

(continued)

interest, with the exception of students in the case-managed group being somewhat more likely to receive free or reduced-price lunch (see Table 4.1; see also Box 4.1 for an explanation of how to interpret the baseline and impact tables in this report). The student sample is predominantly minority and low income, with approximately 60 percent Hispanic and 34 percent black students and more than 50 percent of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.[5] Approximately 55 percent of the students in the study sample are female, 12 percent are classified as students for whom English is a second language, and 3 percent were in gifted programs when the study began. Regarding this evaluation's main outcomes of interest, the students in the study had an average attendance rate of nearly 96 percent, and approximately 9 percent were chronically absent in the year before the study. Finally, students in the sample had average core course

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[5]One school district was unable to provide students' free/reduced-price lunch status.

Table 4.1 (continued)

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the school records analysis sample, which includes all students with course failure data for the 2012-2013 school year (one study district is excluded from this sample because student records data for this school year are not available). Due to small numbers, percentages for the Native American demographic group are not included in the table.

The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school. The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed distribution of the case-managed group across random assignment blocks as the basis for the adjustment.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]The missing rate for this characteristic is 27 percent. Data for this characteristic were not available for students in one of the six districts represented in the school records analysis sample.

[b]A chi-square test was used to determine whether there is a systematic difference between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group at baseline, based on the characteristics included in this table as well as indicators of missing data for all relevant student characteristics.

[c]Due to missing values, the number of students included varies by characteristic. The average percentage of missing data on any given characteristic is 11 percent and ranges from 0 percent (gender) to 27 percent (free or reduced-price lunch eligibility). The percentage of missing data is high for free/reduced-price lunch eligibility because data for this characteristic were not available for students in one of the six districts in the school records analysis sample.

marks of approximately 80 percent, and about one-quarter of the students failed at least one core course during the 2011-2012 school year.

Comparisons of the case-managed and non-case-managed students in the student survey analysis sample at baseline on family characteristics, educational aspirations, engagement with school, and adult support found the two groups to be similar, as presented in Table 4.2. This table shows that more than 50 percent of the students in the study lived with at least two parents or guardians, nearly 20 percent of students reported that their mother did not finish high school, and, among those with siblings of at least high school age, approximately one-third had at least one sibling who had dropped out of high school. Students in both the case-managed and non-case-managed groups reported feeling supported by adults in school, at home, and outside of school and home,[6] and they reported similar levels of engagement in school. These numbers

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[6]The survey asked students to think about adults outside of their family and school.

Box 4.1

Reading and Interpreting the Findings in the Report Tables

Many of the tables in this report show the baseline characteristics of, services received by, or outcomes for students in the case-managed and non-case-managed groups — as well as the difference between these two groups. The values presented in these tables are derived as follows:

"Estimated Impact" or "Estimated Difference." This column shows the difference between students in the case-managed and non-case-managed groups with respect to their baseline characteristics, the services that they received, and their outcomes. The values in this column should be interpreted as the estimated difference or impact *for the average student in the analysis sample*. The statistical significance of the estimated difference or impact is indicated (*) when the p-value is less than or equal to 0.100, indicating no more than a 10 percent probability that the difference arose by chance. Estimated impacts are regression adjusted to account for random differences in the baseline characteristics of case-managed and non-case-managed students. All impact findings represent "intent-to-treat" estimates because some students in the case-managed group did not receive case management. See Appendix A for more information.

"Case-Managed Group." This column shows the observed baseline characteristics or outcomes of students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. Thus this column reflects the mean outcomes of the average student in the analysis sample.

"Non-Case-Managed Group." This column shows the counterfactual — that is, it provides an estimate of what the mean outcomes of case-managed students would have been had they not been randomly assigned to receive case management. The values in this column are regression adjusted based on the observed characteristics of students in the case-managed group.

"Effect Size" (Chapter 5). This column shows the estimated impact scaled as an effect size. The effect size is a metric widely used for gauging whether the magnitude of a program's impact is large or small. It is defined as the estimated effect of a program (or the difference in outcomes between case-managed and non-case-managed students) divided by the standard deviation of the outcome of interest. For example, an effect size of 0.20 represents an improvement in student outcomes that is equal to 20 percent of the standard deviation of the student-level distribution for that particular outcome. The effect size, therefore, provides an indication of how much Communities In Schools improved a student's outcomes relative to where they would have been in the outcome distribution for students in the program's target population. In this report, effect sizes are calculated based on the standard deviation of the outcome of interest for students in the non-case-managed group, which reflects the expected variability in the outcome that one would find in the absence of Communities In Schools. Effect sizes of about 0.20 or less are generally considered "small," effect sizes of about 0.50 are considered "moderate," and effect sizes of about 0.80 or more are considered "large."*

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*Cohen (1988).

Table 4.2

**Selected Baseline Characteristics of Students in the
Student Survey Analysis Sample**

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Difference
Household makeup[a] (%)				
Lives with 2 or more parents/guardians	55.0	52.1	2.9	0.190
Lives with 1 parent/guardian	38.2	40.6	-2.4	0.276
Lives with 1 or more grandparent(s)	7.3	9.0	-1.7	0.164
Lives with his/her own child	2.7	2.4	0.4	0.608
Language predominantly spoken at home[b] (%)				
English	76.4	76.1	0.2	0.894
Not English	23.6	23.9	-0.2	0.894
Parent educational attainment (%)				
Father				0.329
Not a high school graduate	17.3	20.9	-3.7	
High school graduate or GED recipient	25.9	21.9	4.0	
College graduate or higher	12.2	14.4	-2.2	
Don't know	44.6	42.7	1.9	
Mother				0.852
Not a high school graduate	18.3	21.2	-2.9	
High school graduate or GED recipient	28.4	27.6	0.8	
College graduate or higher	23.7	24.2	-0.5	
Don't know	29.6	27.0	2.7	
Did any siblings leave high school before graduation?[c] (%)				
None left high school	64.8	66.1	-1.4	0.590
At least 1 left high school	35.2	33.9	1.4	0.590
Student engagement with school (1-4)[d]	2.85	2.87	-0.01	0.656
How far would you like to go in school with your education? (%)				0.935
Some high school	0.7	1.2	-0.5	
Finish high school	11.7	9.1	2.6	
Some college or trade/technical school	6.0	5.5	0.5	
Finish college or trade/technical school	45.1	44.9	0.1	
Graduate school after college	29.9	32.2	-2.3	
Don't know	6.6	7.2	-0.6	

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Difference
How far do you think you will actually go in school or with your education? (%)				0.937
Some high school	1.6	1.0	0.6	
Finish high school	12.4	12.5	-0.1	
Some college or trade/technical school	11.0	10.6	0.3	
Finish college or trade/technical school	38.3	41.0	-2.7	
Graduate school after college	25.5	26.1	-0.6	
Don't know	11.3	8.8	2.4	
Caring adult at home (1-4)[e]	3.38	3.40	-0.03	0.236
Caring adult at school (1-4)[f]	3.31	3.28	0.03	0.333
Caring adult outside of home or school (1-4)[g]	3.46	3.49	-0.03	0.367
Joint test of difference between groups				0.966
Sample size[h] (N = 2,093)	1,058	1,035		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on fall 2012 baseline student survey.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

   The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school. The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed distribution of the case-managed group across random assignment blocks as the basis for the adjustment.

   Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

   A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

   [a]These survey categories are not mutually exclusive.

   [b]Of those who responded that English was not the predominant language at home, 92 percent reported speaking Spanish at home.

   [c]Respondents without siblings old enough for high school are omitted.

   [d]Scale based on responses to survey questions 13a-13e, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.83.

   [e]Scale based on response to survey questions 6a-6g, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.81.

   [f]Scale based on response to survey questions 12a-12f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.89.

   [g]Scale based on response to survey questions 10a-10f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.89.

   [h]Due to missing values, the number of students included varies by characteristic. The sample size reported here is for the student survey analysis sample. The percentage of missing data on any given characteristic averages to 8 percent and ranges from 3 percent to 35 percent.

suggest that, as expected, random assignment created two groups that were comparable at the start of the 2012-2013 school year.

Case-Managed Service Participation

This section provides details about the services received by Communities In Schools case-managed students by examining the type, frequency, and amount of services provided to case-managed students (see the "Activities" column in Figure 1.1, the Communities In Schools case management logic model). The research team learned about the amount of Level 2 services students received from interviews with site coordinators and from management information system (MIS) data documented by Communities In Schools site coordinators.[7] Communities In Schools staff members explained that whenever a case-managed student receives any type of Level 2 service, that service should be documented in the system. Site coordinators and affiliate staff members reported that, in most cases, case-managed students' participation in Level 1 services is not recorded in the system. The MIS data provide information about the services students received in up to eight categories — academic, behavior, attendance, social or life skills, basic needs and resources, college and career preparation, enrichment or motivation, and family-related services (see Box 4.2 for additional details). For every case-managed student, site coordinators track both service contacts — each time any service is received — and the length of time each service contact lasts.

Overall Service Contacts and Service Hours

After being randomly assigned to the case-managed group, students were enrolled in case management for just under 30 calendar weeks, on average, or about three-quarters of the 2012-2013 school year. As Table 4.3 indicates, 89 percent of students in the survey analysis sample who were assigned to the Communities In Schools case-managed group had at least 1 documented direct service contact during the school year.[8] They received an average of 19.4 service contacts during the year and an average of 16.2 service hours. For the portion of the

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[7]The research team received MIS data for students in the case-managed group. The data varied by affiliate; the Communities In Schools national office provided information for the three affiliates using the national MIS database, and two affiliates provided MIS data from their own or state systems. In order to compare service provision information across the three different data systems, the research team collapsed the MIS data into the eight service types described above. However, not all affiliates had information regarding all eight categories. This information represents the best estimate of service receipt from these data, but due to the inconsistencies in the way information is gathered by the three systems, there may be some suppression or inflation of how much service provision students in the sample received.

[8]The remaining 11 percent of the surveyed students assigned to the case-managed group did not have any direct services documented.

Box 4.2

What Kinds of Activities Are Included in Each Service Type?

Academic services. Adult or peer tutoring, homework assistance, study skills activities, student-teacher conferences

Behavior services. Conflict resolution groups, anger management or other behavioral counseling, violence prevention activities, behavior monitoring and interventions

Attendance services. In-person attendance check-ins and planning

Social or life skills services. Goal-setting activities; self-esteem enhancement activities; girls' or boys' groups; social, relationship, and communication activities; team-building games and activities; crisis and grief counseling services

Basic needs and resources. Provision of school supplies; assistance with utilities, rent, etc.; food and clothing assistance; health activities and checkups

College and career preparation. College admissions preparation and assistance, career counseling, college visits and career field trips, college awareness activities and programs

Enrichment or motivation services. Community service, field trips unrelated to college or career preparation, sports or exercise activities, scouting, arts and crafts, student recognition activities and incentives

Family-related services. Parent education, home visits, parent conferences and contacts, parent and family events and activities, family counseling

school year during which students were enrolled in case management, this amounts to just over 2.5 service contacts per month, each lasting about 50 minutes, on average.[9]

In addition to exploring the MIS data to understand the average number of service contacts and hours received by Communities In Schools case-managed students, the research team examined variation in service receipt. As shown in Figure 4.1, the relationship between overall service contacts and hours was linear for most of the students in the sample such that students' service hours increased by roughly 1 hour for every 2 additional service contacts they received. Within this group, some case-managed students appear to have experienced relatively long contacts, while others appear to have experienced shorter check-ins, as each service contact lasted for an average of 1 hour for some students but an average of only 15 minutes for others.

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[9]Although students were not enrolled in case management for the entire school year, this averages out to just under 2 service contacts, lasting between 45 and 50 minutes each, per month in a 10-month school year.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 4.3

**Service Receipt for Case-Managed Students
in the Student Survey Analysis Sample**

Services Offered	Percentage of Students Receiving Service	Average Number of Times Service Received[a]	Average Total Hours of Service Received
Overall service receipt			
Any service type	88.9	NA	NA
Across all service types	NA	19.4	16.2
Service receipt by service type			
Academic	76.6	4.1	4.3
Behavior	50.1	4.9	4.8
Social/life skills	60.5	7.4	5.8
Basic needs/resources	56.0	2.0	1.6
College/career preparation	42.6	2.0	3.4
Enrichment/motivation	52.4	1.8	4.8
Family-related	47.7	1.2	0.4
Attendance	15.7	2.4	0.9
Number of students[b] (N=1,058)			

SOURCES: Data from Communities In Schools Data Management system (CISDM) and two local CIS service provision databases (2012-2013).

NOTES: The analyses above are for case-managed (program group) students only, and are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey. Outliers and students with missing data are excluded from the analyses; for details, see supplementary Appendix D in Corrin et al. (2015), available at www.mdrc.org.

   The services offered are not mutually exclusive; a student could have received more than one type of service over his or her enrolled period.

   Calculations for the percentage of students receiving a given service are based on a consistent denominator of 1,058 case-managed students. However, not all service types were available in each data source. All data sources provided academic, behavior, and social/life skills service types. The basic needs/resources, college/career preparation, enrichment/motivation, and family-related service types were available for 84.3 percent of student records. The attendance service type was available for 58.1 percent of student records.

   Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in averages and percentages.

   [a]The services are received over the entire time a student was enrolled in CIS case management during the 2012-2013 school year. The average number of days enrolled for case-managed students is 207. The averages presented for number of times and total hours of service include only those students who received the associated service.

   [b]Of all case-managed group students (N=1,058), 11.2 percent did not receive direct case management services. In addition, 2 percent of all non-case-managed group students (N=1,090) received case management services but are not included in this table.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Figure 4.1

Service Hours by Service Contacts for Case-Managed Students
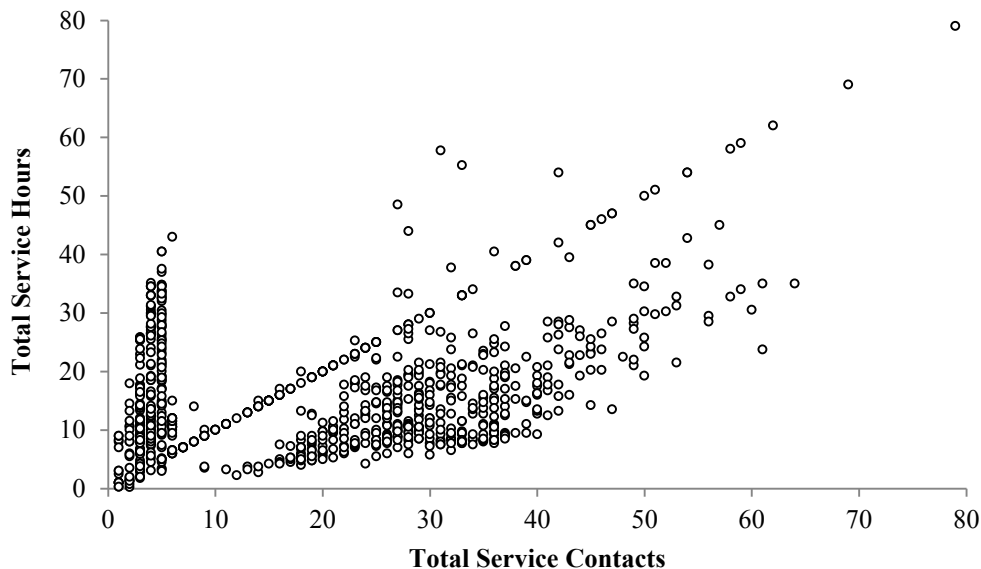
SOURCES: Data from Communities In Schools Data Management system (CISDM) and two local CIS service provision databases (2012-2013).

NOTES: The data reported in this figure represent case-managed (program group) students in the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey. Outliers and students with missing data are excluded from the figure; see supplementary Appendix D in Corrin et al. (2015) for details.

Despite this variation, for most case-managed students, more hours of service were associated with more service contacts.

But Figure 4.1 also shows that there was a group of students with a small number of service contacts but a disproportionately large number of hours — represented by the spike in hours on the scatterplot between 1 and 5 service contacts. Constituting approximately 18 percent of the case-managed student sample, these students had 5 or fewer service contacts and more than 10 service hours, with many students averaging upward of 5 hours per service contact. Information shared by Communities In Schools' local and national staff members suggests that these students probably attended half- or full-day activities a few times during the year — most likely field trips. For example, Communities In Schools case-managed students

often have opportunities to attend trips to colleges or spend a day doing community service with their site coordinator and other students.

During interviews, Communities In Schools site coordinators and affiliate staff members explained that the variation in the services students receive is based on students' individual circumstances, needs, and personalities. Site coordinators from half of the schools visited described certain splits in their caseloads, explaining that some "lighter touch" students may need only some academic tutoring or attendance check-ins, whereas other students have additional needs, require more attention, and/or experience more intense life circumstances that impede their progress at school, and these students may receive more hours or services. But some site coordinators also reported that students' service contacts and hours may be based on their openness to receiving services — to sharing their problems and seeking out site coordinators to discuss particular needs or personal challenges. Such students may receive more services than others who are more reserved or harder to reach.

Service Receipt by Service Type

In addition to providing information about the overall number of service contacts and service hours for case-managed students, Table 4.3 includes information about the different types of services students received. The services received by the greatest proportion of case-managed students were academically focused. More than 75 percent of case-managed students received academic services, with those students receiving an average of 4 service contacts totaling 4.3 hours during the year. Additionally, 61 percent of case-managed students received social or life skills services, with averages of 7.4 service contacts and 5.8 hours, and half received a behavior-related service, averaging nearly 5 service contacts and 5 hours of service. This information aligns with site coordinators' statements during interviews that students most frequently received academic and behavioral services. Nearly all site coordinators discussed facilitating social skill- and behavior-focused groups with case-managed students, and most discussed implementing behavioral interventions and modifications, as described in Chapter 3.

More than half of all case-managed students also received services focused on enrichment and motivation, averaging under 2 service contacts but nearly 5 hours of service per student. Many site coordinators said that field trips are an important aspect of enrichment services for case-managed students, which may explain why the service hours are high relative to some of the other service types even though service contacts are low. The smallest proportion of students — approximately one in six — received attendance services, and those who did received less than 1 hour of service. However, site coordinators and affiliate staff members explained during interviews that the attendance-related work done by most site coordinators

involves monitoring students' attendance records rather than providing direct services, so such work would not be documented in the system and linked to individual students.[10]

Such monitoring is one way students may receive support from site coordinators that does not directly (physically) involve them. Although most of the affiliates in the study do not track these indirect support services as part of students' individual records, one affiliate does use a system that allows site coordinators to log indirect actions related to case-managed students. In that affiliate, all case-managed students received indirect services. Specifically, site coordinators recorded an average of 8 instances of indirect service totaling an average of approximately 2 hours per student. Although the time that site coordinators spend on these tasks may vary by affiliate, this supports the notion that, in addition to getting connected to and provided with the direct support services described above, one component of receiving case management is that students have an adult in the school who spends time checking on them during the school year.

Services Reported by Case-Managed and Non-Case-Managed Students

As discussed in Chapter 2, the schools in which Communities In Schools operates appear to have many services available to students that aim to address the diverse issues they may face. The students in the non-case-managed group presumably have access to the wide variety of services offered in their schools, including services provided or brokered by Communities In Schools as Level 1 services. While MIS data on the services received by non-case-managed students are not collected across the study schools, the research team administered student surveys asking case-managed and non-case-managed students about the activities they participated in and the services they received. Using this common method for both groups of students provides comparable data across all students in the study so that differences between the two groups can be clearly assessed. Given that these two groups of students were equivalent at the time of random assignment, this comparison indicates how service receipt, as reported by students, differs as a result of Communities In Schools case management.

Table 4.4 details the services reported by case-managed and non-case-managed students. For a majority of the support activities included on the survey, case-managed students reported higher levels of participation than non-case-managed students, and a number of the differences between the two groups were statistically significant. Specifically, case-managed

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[10]As indicated in Table 4.3, data on student service receipt came from three different service provision databases. Not all service types were available in each data source. The basic needs/resources, college/career preparation, enrichment/motivation, and family-related service types were available for 84.3 percent of student records. The attendance service type was available for 58.1 percent of student records.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 4.4

**Impacts on Student Survey Outcomes for the
Student Survey Analysis Sample**

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference		P-Value for Estimated Impact
In-school support activities (times per year)[a]					
Received tutoring or homework help	6.8	6.9	0.0		0.966
Met with a mentor	3.5	2.2	1.3	***	0.000
Community service/Volunteering	2.8	2.3	0.5	*	0.060
Exercise class or club	2.4	2.4	0.0		0.910
Positive behavior program like drug-free/antibullying	2.8	2.2	0.6	**	0.031
College planning activity	5.3	4.8	0.5		0.190
Career planning activity	3.2	2.9	0.3		0.403
Job shadowing/Internship	1.6	1.7	-0.1		0.620
After-school program	4.8	5.6	-0.9	**	0.031
Received assistance like school supplies, food, bus pass, clothing, or gifts	2.8	2.7	0.1		0.736
Health checkup	3.2	3.6	-0.3		0.270
In-school meetings with adults (times per year)[a]					
Individual meeting about academics	7.1	6.2	0.9	**	0.023
Individual meeting for support during a life-changing event	2.9	2.6	0.3		0.311
Individual meeting about personal goals and behavior	5.9	4.7	1.2	***	0.003
Group meeting about academics	5.5	4.4	1.1	***	0.003
Group meeting for support during a life-changing event	2.7	2.4	0.3		0.273
Group meeting about personal goals and behavior	4.7	3.7	1.0	***	0.009
Group meeting for social activities	5.9	2.9	2.9	***	0.000

(continued)

students reported engaging in the following activities significantly more often than non-case-managed students: meeting with a mentor, participating in community service or volunteering, and participating in a positive behavior program. Case-managed students reported participating in after-school programs less often than non-case-managed students, but it is possible that they do not view some Communities In Schools activities that take place after school hours, such as meeting with a mentor or being in an exercise club, as after-school programs.

Table 4.4 (continued)

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Impact
Met with an adult at school to set specific goals for the year (%)	64.4	52.6	11.9 ***	0.000
Earned rewards for improving grades, attendance, or behavior, or for reaching or making progress toward goals (%)	58.7	55.9	2.8	0.192
An adult in school connected student to support programs or help outside of school (%)	50.6	42.3	8.3 ***	0.000
Number of students[b] (N=2,093)	1,058	1,035		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

 The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted, controlling for random assignment blocks by school, as well as the following baseline characteristics: race, gender, free or reduced-price lunch status, English as a second language, and whether qualified for a gifted program.

 The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed mean covariate values for the case-managed group as the basis for the adjustment.

 Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

 A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

 [a]The times per year measure was created by combining a measure of duration ("For how long did you do this activity?") and a measure of frequency ("How often did you do this activity?") for each of the support activities above in the spring 2013 follow-up student survey. The duration measure was converted from a four-point scale to an estimate of the number of weeks per school year a student participated in the activity: "I never did this activity" = 0 weeks, "less than half of the school year" = 9 weeks, "about half of the school year" = 18 weeks, and "most or all of the school year" = 27 weeks. The frequency measure was converted from a four-point scale to an estimate of the number of times per week a student participated in the given activity: "I never did this activity" = 0, "less than once a month" = 0.125, "1-2 times a month" = 0.375, and "one or more times a week" = 1.

 [b]The sample size reported in the table is for the full student survey analysis sample. However, the sample size varies across outcomes due to missing data. The percentage of missing data on any given outcome does not exceed 5 percent.

 Table 4.4 also includes information about students' reports of in-school meetings with adults. Case-managed students reported participating in individual and group meetings led by adults focused on their academics or personal goals and behavior significantly more often than non-case-managed students. They also reported participating in group meetings for social activities more often than non-case-managed students. Finally, students in the case-managed

group were more likely than non-case-managed students to report meeting with an adult at school to set specific goals for the year and to report that an adult in school connected them with support programs or help.

These results support the information shared by site coordinators that is discussed in Chapter 3. A majority of site coordinators told of meeting with each case-managed student to discuss goals and academics, conducting group sessions with case-managed students, connecting students with mentors, and engaging students in community service activities. However, the absolute levels reported by both case-managed and non-case-managed students for many activities were not high. For example, case-managed students reported meeting with a mentor an average of 3.5 times per year, compared with 2.2 times per year for non-case-managed students, and non-case-managed students reported participating in an after-school program 5.6 times per year, compared with 4.8 times for case-managed students. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that these numbers represent averages — for students who are not facing major struggles, these levels of support may be more than enough, while they may not be sufficient for students who are struggling a great deal. Further, within both the case-managed and non-case-managed groups, there are students who received very few services and students who received many services. One key question, then, is whether the students who have the greatest needs received the greatest levels of support. This question is explored in the section below.

Student Service Receipt by Risk Category

While the primary analyses for this study examine all study students, both Communities In Schools site coordinators and school staff members noted that the types of students eligible for case management demonstrate varied levels of need. Communities In Schools staff members explained that certain students have more intensive needs, evidenced by failing grades, very poor attendance, behavioral infractions, and other social and personal challenges, and should therefore receive more services than other case-managed students. With this in mind, the research team conducted a set of analyses to examine variation in service receipt for students who could be considered "high risk" compared with the "moderate-risk" students in the sample to determine whether the students who appear to have the greatest needs receive the greatest levels of service.[11] Using school records data, the research team classified students as being high risk if they were either chronically absent (less than 90 percent attendance), failed one or more core courses, or were suspended in the 2011-2012 school year — the year before the study. Approximately 40 percent of the students in the Communities In Schools case-managed group

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[11]The two groups are referred to as high and moderate risk rather than high and low risk because being eligible for case management itself implies some level of risk.

fall into the high-risk group. The other 60 percent of case-managed students were classified as moderate risk.[12]

Table 4.5 details Level 2 service receipt for high- and moderate-risk case-managed students. Overall, the primary finding from this investigation is that the services received by high- and moderate-risk students were quite similar, with no significant differences in their overall number of service contacts or hours. There were, however, minor differences between these groups that might suggest some distinction between high- and moderate-risk students. The MIS data indicate that the percentage of case-managed students in the high-risk group who did not receive any services was smaller — 8.7 percent, compared with 12.8 percent for moderate-risk students. It may be that high-risk students are more difficult to reach (for example, they may come to school less frequently and have disciplinary infractions), so these numbers suggest additional effort on the part of site coordinators to connect with these students. There was also some differentiation in the types of services students received, as high-risk students were more likely to receive services focused on behavior and social or life skills, but they were somewhat less likely to receive college and career preparation services than moderate-risk students.

Moderate-risk students received more hours of college or career preparation, the only service type for which there was a statistically significant difference between the two risk groups in hours of service receipt. There were only a few relatively minor differences in service contacts, most notably in academic services, where the high-risk students received support more often than the moderate-risk students.

Table 4.6 shows differences in reported service receipt between the case-managed and non-case-managed students broken down by risk category, adding more detail to the findings discussed earlier, with reference to Table 4.4. These findings fall into four categories based on whether there were overall differences between case-managed and non-case-managed students (Table 4.4) and whether there were differences between those two groups for the high-risk or moderate-risk students (Table 4.6).

First, Table 4.6 shows a significant difference between case-managed and non-case-managed students in both the high- and moderate-risk groups in their reports of participating in particular support activities. These activities include mentoring; adult-facilitated group meetings related to academics, to personal goals and behavior, and to social activities; goal setting with adults; and getting connected to out-of-school supports — activities where there was also an overall difference between case-managed and non-case-managed students, as shown in Table

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[12]Percentages are calculated based on the school records analysis sample, which includes 1,029 case-managed students.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 4.5

**Service Receipt for Case-Managed Students in the
Student Survey Analysis Sample, by High- and Moderate-Risk Students**

Services Offered	Percentage of Students Receiving Service		Average Number of Times Service Received[a]		Average Total Hours of Service Received	
	High-Risk Students[b]	Moderate-Risk Students	High-Risk Students	Moderate-Risk Students	High-Risk Students	Moderate-Risk Students
Overall service receipt						
Any service type	91.3	87.2 **	NA	NA	NA	NA
Across all service types	NA	NA	19.3	19.4	16.1	16.3
Service receipt by service type						
Academic	76.5	76.6	4.6	3.8 ***	4.5	4.2
Behavior	56.1	46.0 ***	4.8	5.0	4.7	4.9
Social/life skills	65.3	57.3 ***	7.2	7.6	6.0	5.7
Basic needs/resources	53.5	57.6	1.9	2.1	1.6	1.7
College/career preparation	39.2	44.9 *	2.0	2.0	3.0	3.7 *
Enrichment/motivation	52.1	52.5	1.6	1.8 *	4.8	4.8
Family-related	46.7	48.4	1.2	1.1 *	0.4	0.4
Attendance	17.4	14.6	2.5	2.3	1.0	0.8
Number of students[c]	(N=426)	(N=632)				

(continued)

Table 4.5 (continued)

SOURCES: Data from Communities In Schools Data Management system (CISDM) and two local CIS service provision databases (2012-2013).

NOTES: The analyses above are for case-managed (program group) students only, and are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey. Outliers and students with missing data are excluded from the analyses; for details, see supplementary Appendix D in Corrin et al. (2015), available at www.mdrc.org.

The services offered are not mutually exclusive; a student could have received more than one type of service over his or her enrolled period.

Calculations for the percentage of students receiving a given service are based on a consistent denominator of 426 high-risk students and 632 moderate-risk students. However, not all service types were available in each data source. All data sources provided academic, behavior, and social/life skills service types. The basic needs/resources, college/career preparation, enrichment/motivation, and family-related service types were available for 84.3 percent of student records. The attendance service type was available for 58.1 percent of student records.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in averages and percentages.

A t-test was conducted to test for differences between findings for high- and moderate-risk students. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent, ** = 5 percent, * = 10 percent.

[a]The services were received over the entire time a student was enrolled in CIS case management during the 2012-2013 school year. The average number of days enrolled for case-managed students is 207. The averages presented for number of times and total hours of service include only those students who received the associated service.

[b]High-risk students are defined as those who were chronically absent, who failed a core course, or who were ever suspended in the 2011-2012 school year. Moderate-risk students include those who were never chronically absent, never failed a core course, and were never suspended in the 2011-2012 school year.

[c]Of all case-managed group students (N=1,058), 11.2 percent did not receive direct case management services. In addition, 2 percent of all non-case-managed group students (N=1,090) received case management services but are not included in this table.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 4.6

**Impacts on Student Survey Outcomes for High- and Moderate-Risk Students
in the Student Survey Analysis Sample**

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Impact
In-school support activities (times per year)[a]				
Received tutoring or homework help				
High-risk students	7.1	7.4	-0.3	0.668
Moderate-risk students	6.5	6.6	-0.1	0.811
Met with a mentor				
High-risk students	3.4	2.2	1.2 ***	0.010
Moderate-risk students	3.2	1.9	1.3 ***	0.001
Community service/Volunteering				
High-risk students	2.8	1.9	0.9 **	0.038
Moderate-risk students	2.5	2.3	0.2	0.575
Exercise class or club				
High-risk students	2.2	2.3	-0.1	0.769
Moderate-risk students	2.5	2.3	0.2	0.695
Positive behavior program like drug-free/antibullying				
High-risk students	3.2	2.5	0.7	0.146
Moderate-risk students	2.6	2.2	0.4	0.297
College planning activity				
High-risk students	5.5	4.4	1.1 *	0.095
Moderate-risk students	5.1	4.9	0.3	0.619
Career planning activity				
High-risk students	3.5	3.1	0.4	0.418
Moderate-risk students	2.9	3.0	-0.1	0.874
Job shadowing/Internship				
High-risk students	1.9	1.8	0.1	0.781
Moderate-risk students	1.3	1.7	-0.4	0.207
After-school program				
High-risk students	4.1	5.9	-1.8 ***	0.009
Moderate-risk students	5.1	5.5	-0.5	0.402
Received assistance like school supplies, food, bus pass, clothing, or gifts				
High-risk students	2.8	3.3	-0.4	0.407
Moderate-risk students	2.9	2.4	0.5	0.178
Health check-up				
High-risk students	3.4	4.1	-0.6	0.224
Moderate-risk students	3.2	3.4	-0.3	0.521

(continued)

Table 4.6 (continued)

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Impact
In-school meetings with adults (times per year)				
Individual meeting about academics				
High-risk students	7.7	6.6	1.1	0.134
Moderate-risk students	6.8	6.0	0.9	0.109
Individual meeting for support during a life-changing event[b]				
High-risk students	3.9	2.8	1.1 **	0.045
Moderate-risk students	2.3	2.5	-0.2	0.611
Individual meeting about personal goals and behavior				
High-risk students	6.3	5.3	1.0	0.154
Moderate-risk students	5.9	4.4	1.5 ***	0.006
Group meeting about academics				
High-risk students	5.7	4.2	1.5 **	0.020
Moderate-risk students	5.7	4.6	1.1 **	0.038
Group meeting for support during a life-changing event				
High-risk students	3.8	2.8	0.9 *	0.098
Moderate-risk students	2.2	2.2	0.1	0.883
Group meeting about personal goals and behavior				
High-risk students	5.4	4.1	1.4 **	0.035
Moderate-risk students	4.5	3.4	1.1 **	0.032
Group meeting for social activities				
High-risk students	6.4	3.2	3.2 ***	0.000
Moderate-risk students	6.1	3.1	3.0 ***	0.000
Met with an adult at school to set specific goals for the year (%)				
High-risk students	69.5	58.1	11.4 ***	0.001
Moderate-risk students	61.4	48.4	13.0 ***	0.000
Earned rewards for improving grades, attendance, or behavior, or for reaching or making progress toward goals (%)				
High-risk students	59.2	56.8	2.4	0.503
Moderate-risk students	63.1	57.5	5.7 **	0.047
An adult in school connected student to support programs or help outside of school (%)				
High-risk students	54.2	47.3	6.9 *	0.058
Moderate-risk students	50.4	38.9	11.4 ***	0.000
Number of students[c] (N=1,900)	947	953		
High-risk students[c] (N=767)	406	361		
Moderate-risk students[c] (N=1,133)	541	592		

(continued)

Table 4.6 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted, controlling for random assignment blocks by school as well as the following baseline characteristics: race, gender, free or reduced-price lunch status, English as a second language, and whether qualified for a gifted program.

The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed mean covariate values for the case-managed group as the basis for the adjustment.

High-risk students include those students who were chronically absent, who failed at least one core course, or who were ever suspended in the baseline (2011-2012) school year. Moderate-risk students include those who were never chronically absent, never failed a core course, and were never suspended in the baseline year.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]The times per year measure was created by combining a measure of duration ("For how long did you do this activity?") and a measure of frequency ("How often did you do this activity?") for each of the above support activities in the spring 2013 follow-up student survey. The duration measure was converted from a four-point scale to an estimate of the number of weeks per school year a student participated in the activity: "I never did this activity" = 0 weeks, "less than half of the school year" = 9 weeks, "about half of the school year" = 18 weeks, and "most or all of the school year" = 27 weeks. The frequency measure was converted from a four-point scale to an estimate of the number of times per week a student participated in the given activity: "I never did this activity" = 0, "less than once a month" = 0.125, "1-2 times a month" = 0.375, and "one or more times a week" = 1.

[b]There is a statistically significant difference (at the 10 percent level) between the service contrast ("estimated difference") for the high-risk subgroup and for the moderate-risk subgroup.

[c]The sample size reported in the table is for the full student survey analysis sample, minus two school districts (193 students) that are excluded because school records data are not available at baseline to define the high- and moderate-risk subgroups. The student sample size varies across outcomes due to missing data. The percentage of missing data on any given outcome does not exceed 5 percent.

4.4. Table 4.6 also indicates that there were some activities for which there were no significant differences between case-managed and non-case-managed students at either risk level, even though Table 4.4 shows an overall difference. These activities include positive behavior programs and individual meetings between students and adults related to academic issues.

Case management appears to be making a more notable difference for students in the first category of activities, where the differences are significant even at the smaller sample size of each risk group. Although case management is making a difference in the second category of activities, that difference is not robust enough to be significant for either risk group.

In the third category of activities, there was an overall difference between case-managed and non-case-managed students (Table 4.4), but at the risk-group level, there was a significant difference for only one risk group (Table 4.6). These are areas where the overall difference in supports received seems to be driven more by differences between case-managed and non-case-managed students at one of the two risk levels. Moderate-risk case-managed students report greater participation than non-case-managed students in individual meetings with adults about personal goals and behavior. High-risk case-managed students report greater participation than non-case-managed students in community service and volunteering and less participation in after-school programs.

Finally, there are particular support activities for which case management is changing students' engagement at only one of the two risk levels (that is, where Table 4.4 does not show an overall difference between case-managed and non-case-managed students, but Table 4.6 shows a difference at one risk level). Table 4.6 shows that moderate-risk case-managed students report earning rewards for accomplishments and high-risk case-managed students report participating in college planning activities more than their respective groups of non-case-managed peers. Of particular note is that high-risk students overall — case-managed and non-case-managed students — report participating in individual meetings with adults related to life-changing events more than moderate-risk students; and among the high-risk students, case-managed students report participating in these meetings more than the non-case-managed students.

The information presented in Table 4.6 indicates that there was some variation in service receipt for high-risk and moderate-risk students in both the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Taken with Table 4.4, these findings suggest that further investigation may be warranted to better understand how students in the high- and moderate-risk groups may be differentially targeted for support services.

Summary and Discussion

This chapter included information about the students participating in this study and described the services received by students assigned to both the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Additionally, it highlighted the key areas of difference between the two groups, explored whether the services received varied for high- and moderate-risk students, and raised the question of whether the differences in the support services received by case-managed and non-case-managed students were large enough to cause differences in their outcomes.

Baseline characteristics for the study students suggest that those assigned to the case-managed and non-case-managed groups were comparable at the time of random assignment, which supports the notion that random assignment created equivalent groups and therefore

differences between the two groups at the end of the school year are attributable to students' participation in Communities In Schools case management. Overall, the information available suggests that there were differences in the support services received by case-managed and non-case-managed students — that Communities In Schools case management is providing something above and beyond what students otherwise receive. In particular, case-managed students reported having more meetings led by adults to discuss academics and behavior and a greater proportion of case-managed students reported that an adult in school connected them with out-of-school support. This additional attention aligns with the Level 2 service goal of ensuring that case-managed students have an adult, or multiple adults, in the school specifically tasked with providing support and checking on them throughout the school year. As noted in Chapter 2, however, there appear to be many services broadly available to students in these schools, and the student surveys confirm that the non-case-managed students participate in a wide variety of activities. Even those students not receiving Communities In Schools Level 2 case management are getting some support services: They are by no means a "no service" comparison group.

The findings presented in this chapter also raise the possibility that the level and targeting of services to case-managed students may not be sufficient to improve students' outcomes in this first year of the study. First, the level of services received by case-managed students documented in the Communities In Schools MIS data seems lower than might be expected. Given that weekly groups and academic support services figured prominently in site coordinators' descriptions of the services students receive, one might expect to see a greater number of hours and service contacts for case-managed students. On the other hand, given that site coordinators have an average of 84 students on their caseloads, 16 hours and 19 contacts may be reasonable averages, as this translates to students seeing the site coordinator for approximately one school period twice each month they were enrolled. This amount may be sufficient for some students, but it is likely that many students are in need of more ongoing and substantial support in order to help them stay on track to progress through school.

Although the MIS data indicate that there was variation in service receipt among case-managed students — some students received large amounts of service and others received very little — one important question that remains is what drives that variation and whether those students who are in need of the most intensive levels of service are receiving the support they need. To begin to explore that question, the research team examined differences in levels of service receipt for high- and moderate-risk students, as defined using school records from the previous school year. While there appears to be a small amount of differentiation in the services provided to students in these groups, high-risk case-managed students did not receive a greater number of overall hours or service contacts than moderate-risk students — which is especially notable given that Communities In Schools sets out to serve the highest-risk students. It may be worth further examination into why the students who may be the most likely to drop out of school do not seem to receive more intensive levels of case management. Given that high-risk

students did not receive a greater number of service contacts or hours of service and that site coordinators stated during interviews that some students receive more services because they more actively seek out support and interactions with site coordinators, Communities In Schools staff members may want to carefully consider whether the students with the greatest needs are receiving the attention they need to be successful in school. Alternatively, they may consider whether, in some cases, more outgoing students who might otherwise seek different supports are receiving disproportionate amounts of site coordinators' limited time.

Overall, the critical outstanding question is whether the level and intensity of services received by case-managed study students — and the magnitude of the differences that emerged between case-managed and non-case-managed students — was enough to shift their academic, behavioral, and attendance outcomes in the first year of this study. This question is examined in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

The Impact of Case Management

The focus of this chapter is on whether Communities In Schools Level 2 case management had an impact on students' academic and behavioral outcomes. As mentioned in Chapter 1, these impact findings are interim, and reflect only one year of students receiving case-managed services. A subsequent and final report will present findings on the two-year impact of receiving case management.

As described in Chapter 1, the Communities In Schools experimental study of case management investigates impacts on three kinds of student outcomes: primary, secondary, and mediating. The two primary outcomes for the evaluation are chronic absenteeism and course failure. These two outcomes are primary because they are predictive of students staying in school until graduation, which is the ultimate goal of Communities In Schools.[1] The secondary outcomes for the evaluation are measures of school progress, student behaviors and attitudes, and academic achievement. Impacts on these secondary outcomes are examined to aid in the interpretation of the program's effect on the two primary outcomes (course failure and chronic absenteeism). Finally, the mediating outcomes for the evaluation are behaviors and attitudes that are precursors to students' improved success in school: their connections to adults, school engagement, attitudes about education, and educational goals and expectations (shown in Figure 1.1 as "Mediators"). Examining effects on these mediating outcomes can help track the pathway along which Communities In Schools produces impacts on the primary and secondary outcomes.

Random assignment was used to determine which students would participate in Communities In Schools Level 2 case management, as explained in Chapter 4; therefore, the impact of the program can be estimated by comparing the outcomes of students who were invited to participate in case management (the case-managed group) with the outcomes of students who were assigned not to receive case management, but who retained access to whatever other types of services were available in their schools (the non-case-managed group). The tables in this chapter show impacts on each outcome and also present the impact estimates as an effect size, a common metric that makes it possible to compare the relative size of impacts measured on different metrics. (See Box 4.1 for an explanation of how to interpret the findings in the report tables and effect sizes.)

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[1]Given the time frame of this evaluation, the study team cannot track the full sample of middle school and high school students through high school graduation. For this reason, the primary outcomes for the evaluation are indicators of future school dropout.

This chapter starts with a discussion of impacts on mediating outcomes, followed by impacts on primary and secondary outcomes.[2] The chapter concludes with a summary section that discusses the interim results and explains what to expect in the second-year report.

Highlights from this chapter include the following:

- **Mediating outcomes.** For most of the mediating outcomes — relationships with caring, supportive adults at home or school, educational attitudes, school engagement, and educational goals and expectations — there were no notable differences between students in the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. However, based on students' reports, Communities In Schools case management had a positive and statistically significant impact on students' likelihood of having caring, supportive relationships with adults outside of home and school, on the quality of their friends and peers, and on their belief that education has positive value for their lives.

- **Primary and secondary outcomes.** Compared with non-case-managed students, case-managed students had a slightly higher rate of chronic absenteeism and a similar rate of core course failure. There were no significant differences between the groups on other measures of school progress, behavior, and academic achievement. Thus, after one year, Communities In Schools case management has not yet been shown to improve outcomes for students related to attendance, course performance, or school discipline.

Impact on Mediating Outcomes

As previously shown in the case management logic model (see Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1), the mediating outcomes are considered predictors of future outcomes. The expectation is that if students experience positive impacts on these outcomes, they will be more likely to experience impacts on the subsequent school progress outcomes that relate directly to Communities In Schools' mission to reduce student dropouts. As discussed in Chapter 4, there are eight types of direct services case-managed students could receive, with academic, social or life skills, basic needs and resources, and enrichment or motivation services being the most frequently administered. According to the Communities In Schools model, being provided with these services

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[2]Because the results of the impact analyses given in this report are viewed as interim findings, and not confirmatory analyses on the impact of Communities In Schools case management on the primary outcomes of chronic absenteeism and course failure after two years, the impact estimates have not been adjusted for multiple hypothesis testing. That is, the findings presented here have not been adjusted to account for the fact that the greater the number of analyses conducted, the greater the possibility that an individual statistically significant finding occurred by chance.

should increase the level of attention a student receives, either from a Communities In Schools site coordinator or through establishing connections with other adults within and outside the school. These additional avenues of support should in turn help students feel more engaged, motivated, and connected in school.

Table 5.1 presents the estimated impact of Communities In Schools Level 2 case management on the study's mediating outcomes, drawn from the survey administered to students in the spring of 2013. Overall, there is not a notable pattern of impacts across these measures. The first panel of the table relates to students' reporting that they have relationships with caring adults either within the school, at home, or outside of school and home.[3] These three outcomes are based on scales rating whether students feel that the adults care, listen, believe in them, and encourage them. Both groups of students are similar in terms of having a supportive, caring relationship with an adult at home and having a supportive, caring relationship with an adult at school, and neither impact estimate is statistically significant. However, there is a statistically significant and positive difference between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups in whether they have a supportive relationship with an adult outside of home or school (effect size = 0.10; p-value = 0.008).[4] This difference suggests that Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services, which involve identifying community-based supports for students, may be connecting the case-managed group with adults outside of the school whom the students are able to trust and with whom they form connections. This finding is consistent with the statistically significant impact shown in Table 4.4: Case-managed students reported more often than non-case-managed students that an adult in school connects students to support or help outside of school.

The next scale reported in Table 5.1 is based on student reports about their friends and peers. Items in this scale relate to having caring friends, friends who help out during hard times, friends who talk about problems, and friends who do what is right. For this construct, the case-managed group reported a slightly higher quality of friends than the non-case-managed group, and this estimate is statistically significant (effect size = 0.08; p-value = 0.030). Similar to the result about supportive, caring relationships with adults outside of home and school, this result suggests that Level 2 case management may help the case-managed students form more trusting and supportive relationships with their peers and friends. This impact is consistent with the

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[3]Examples of such adults outside of school and home could include a counselor at a family counseling center, a coach for a sports team not affiliated with the school, a staff member from a community organization such as a YMCA, or a youth minister at a local church's after-school program.

[4]Out of 17 tests of difference on mediating outcomes, 3 yielded statistically significant results. Given the large number of tests conducted, individual statistically significant findings should be interpreted with caution. Where relevant, the authors have noted other study findings that help put the significant findings in context.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 5.1

**Impacts on Student Behavior and Attitudes for the
Student Survey Analysis Sample**

Item	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Impact	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Impact
Caring adult at home (1-4)[a]	3.36	3.34	0.03	0.04	0.327
Caring adult at school (1-4)[b]	3.23	3.18	0.04	0.06	0.110
Caring adult outside of home or school (1-4)[c]	3.46	3.37	0.08	0.10 ***	0.008
Friend quality (1-4)[d]	2.93	2.88	0.05	0.08 **	0.030
School-sponsored activities					
Students selecting at least 1 activity (%)	83.2	82.1	1.1	0.03	0.493
Mean number of activities done sometimes	2.8	3.0	-0.2	-0.06	0.135
Mean number of activities done often	2.4	2.4	0.0	0.00	0.943
Non-school-sponsored activities					
Students selecting at least 1 activity (%)	77.3	78.9	-1.6	-0.04	0.373
Mean number of activities done sometimes	1.8	1.8	0.0	-0.01	0.759
Mean number of activities done often	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.01	0.895
Student engagement with school (1-4)[e]	2.74	2.71	0.03	0.03	0.333
Educational attitudes (1-4)[f]	3.01	2.99	0.02	0.04	0.217
Positive educational self-perception and effort[g]	2.68	2.69	-0.01	-0.02	0.685
Negative educational self-perception and effort[h]	2.10	2.06	0.04	0.05	0.145
Positive valuation of education[i]	3.31	3.24	0.07	0.11 ***	0.002
How far would you like to go in school with your education? (%)					0.126
Some high school	0.9	1.5	-0.6	-0.05	
Finish high school	11.3	9.8	1.5	0.05	
Some college or trade/technical school	5.7	4.5	1.3	0.06	
Finish college or trade/technical school	27.6	32.0	-4.4	-0.10	
Graduate school after college	44.8	41.9	2.9	0.06	
Don't know	9.8	10.4	-0.5	-0.02	
How far do you think you will actually go in school or with your education? (%)					0.902
Some high school	2.7	2.5	0.2	0.01	
Finish high school	13.4	13.8	-0.4	-0.01	
Some college or trade/technical school	9.3	9.9	-0.5	-0.02	
Finish college or trade/technical school	29.6	31.0	-1.5	-0.03	
Graduate school after college	30.7	29.4	1.3	0.03	
Don't know	14.3	13.6	0.7	0.02	
Number of students [j] (N=2,093)	1,058	1,035			

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the student survey analysis sample, which includes all students who responded to the spring 2013 follow-up student survey.

Estimated impacts are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school, as well as the following baseline characteristics: race, gender, free or reduced-price lunch status, English as a second language, whether qualified for a gifted program, and a baseline measure of the outcome variable.

The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed mean covariate values for the case-managed group as the basis for the adjustment.

Effect sizes are calculated by dividing the impact estimate by the standard deviation of the outcome measure for students in the student survey analysis sample who are in the non-case-managed group.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Scale based on responses to survey questions 17a-17g, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.89.

[b]Scale based on responses to survey questions 8a-8f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.87.

[c]Scale based on responses to survey questions 15a-15f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.93.

[d]Subscale based on responses to survey questions 10a-10f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.73.

[e]Scale based on responses to survey questions 9a-9e, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.84.

[f]Scale based on responses to survey questions 11a-11n, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.84.

[g]Subscale based on responses to survey questions 11b, 11e, 11f, 11g, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.73.

[h]Subscale based on responses to survey questions 11a, 11c, 11d, 11h, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.75.

[i]Subscale based on responses to survey questions 11j-11n, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.79.

[j]The sample size reported in the table is for the full student survey analysis sample. However, the sample size varies across outcomes due to missing data. The percentage of missing data on any given outcome does not exceed 1 percent.

finding presented in Chapter 4 that case-managed students reported being more involved in peer group meetings led by adults, a setting in which supportive peer relationships could have been cultivated.

Students also responded to survey questions about their frequency of participation in school-sponsored and non-school-sponsored activities, such as school sports teams, art or music groups, academic clubs, Junior ROTC, or cultural groups. The differences in the percentages of

case-managed and non-case-managed students who participated in at least one school-sponsored activity or in at least one non-school-sponsored activity were less than 2 percentage points in each case and not statistically significant. In addition, case-managed and non-case-managed students participated in activities with similar frequency.

The items within the school engagement scale shown in Table 5.1 generally asked whether students feel happy, feel safe, feel that they're treated fairly, and feel like a part of their school. The items within the educational attitudes scale asked students about their own perceptions of whether they do well at school, plan their work, persist with homework and schoolwork, give up easily, or have trouble figuring out answers in school. There are no statistically significant differences between case-managed students' and non-case-managed students' reports about their engagement with school and overall educational attitudes.

Table 5.1 shows three subscales related to educational attitudes. The first subscale focused on students' positive educational self-perception and effort. The items in this scale asked students about whether they believe they do well at school, feel that they are as smart as other students, and are persistent with homework and study plans. The second subscale describes a similar construct, but relates to negative educational self-perceptions: for example, whether students think they are slow in finishing their homework, have trouble figuring out answers, or easily give up if a task is hard. There is no notable or statistically significant difference between case-managed and non-case-managed groups in their positive and negative educational self-perceptions. The third educational attitude subscale is about students' positive valuation of education, including items about whether students believe that education will be valuable to get a job, whether it is important to get good grades, and whether school is useful in making good decisions in life. For this subscale there is a statistically significant difference between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups (effect size = 0.11; p-value = 0.002), which suggests that the supports students receive through Communities In Schools case management may be helping them value education more and understand how it can influence their future path.

Table 5.1 also shows the impact of Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services on students' self-reported academic goals and expectations. An omnibus test of statistical significance across the goal and expectation categories shows that there is no difference overall between the case-managed and non-case-managed group with regard to their reported educational goals — how far they would like to go in their education — and educational expectations — how far they think they actually will go with their education. While case-managed students see greater value in their education than their non-case-managed peers, this did not carry over to their self-reported educational goals and expectations.

As explained above, the mediating outcomes are theorized to be a bridge between students receiving services — and consequently experiencing changes in their connections,

supports, and attitudes — and impacts on the study's main outcomes that relate to Communities In Schools' driving mission to keep students on track to graduation. That is, these attitudinal and engagement-oriented outcomes are seen as predictive of later school-related outcomes. The next section of this chapter discusses impact results on such school outcomes.

Impact on Primary and Secondary Outcomes

Table 5.2 presents the estimated impact of Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services on the primary and secondary student outcomes after one year of the study. The primary outcomes relate to factors that impede a student's progress toward graduation: course failure and chronic absenteeism. The secondary outcomes relate to additional aspects of course performance and attendance, as well as student behavior, that are predictive of students making it through the K-12 education system to graduation. (Please note that in Table 5.2 the desired effect may be either positive or negative. For chronic absenteeism, course failure, and average number of suspensions, a negative impact estimate value would indicate fewer of these problems for case-managed students than for non-case-managed students — *better* outcomes for the case-managed group.) The results in Table 5.2 for the two primary outcomes show that a marginally higher percentage of case-managed students — 3 percentage points more — were chronically absent compared with non-case-managed students (effect size = 0.09; p-value = 0.056). About 2 percentage points more case-managed students than non-case-managed students failed a core course. The magnitude of the effect is very small and not statistically significant. In terms of secondary outcomes, the one school progress outcome, core credit accumulation toward graduation, reflects the percentage of core credits accumulated to meet the state graduation requirement for core classes. To graduate from high school in four years, a student would need to earn an average of 25 percent of required core credits annually. The results show that case-managed and non-case-managed groups in high school accumulated almost the same percentage of the core course credits required for graduation (about 20 percent). The impacts of Communities In Schools case management on the outcomes in the student behavior domain, attendance and number of suspensions, were small and not statistically significant. Finally, the results are similar for both groups of students regarding academic achievement as measured by average course marks — 79 out of 100 points, or about a B-/C+ average mark.[5]

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[5]The study team also analyzed the impacts on these primary and secondary outcomes for the high- and moderate-risk subgroups that were included in analyses reported in Chapter 4. The findings were similar to the overall findings. Among the moderate-risk student group there were no statistically significant differences on any of the outcomes listed in Table 5.2. Among the high-risk student group, there was one statistically significant difference similar to the full student sample: A higher percentage of case-managed students were chronically absent compared with non-case-managed students.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Table 5.2

Impacts on Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for the
School Records Analysis Sample

Outcome	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Impact	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Impact
Primary outcomes					
Chronic absenteeism[a] (%)	17.92	14.83	3.09	0.09 *	0.056
Failed at least 1 core course (%)	32.26	30.24	2.03	0.04	0.270
School progress[b]					
Core credit accumulation for graduation (%)	20.28	20.42	-0.15	-0.02	0.768
Student behavior					
Average attendance rate (%)	93.91	94.27	-0.36	-0.05	0.220
Number of suspensions	1.46	1.29	0.16	0.06	0.164
Academic achievement					
Average core course marks (%)	79.33	79.75	-0.42	-0.05	0.118
Sample size[c] (N=2,048)	1,029	1,019			

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on student records obtained from school districts.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the school records analysis sample, which includes all students with course failure data for the 2012-2013 school year (one study district is excluded from this sample because student records data for this school year are not available).

　Estimated impacts are regression-adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school, as well as the following baseline characteristics: race, gender, free or reduced-price lunch status, English as a second language, whether qualified for a gifted program, and a baseline measure of the outcome variable.

　The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed mean covariate values for the case-managed group as the basis for the adjustment.

　Effect sizes are calculated by dividing the impact estimate by the standard deviation of the outcome measure for students in the school records analysis sample who are in the non-case-managed group.

　Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

　A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

　[a]A student is considered chronically absent if he or she has an attendance rate below 90 percent.

　[b]This outcome is for high school students only; the state-level graduation requirements for the four core subjects are used in this calculation. A student can be expected to accumulate about 25 percent of core credits in each year of high school.

　[c]The sample size reported in the table is for the full school records analysis sample. However, the sample size varies across outcomes due to missing data. The percentage of missing data is 19 percent for attendance rates and absenteeism, 6 percent for suspensions, 1 percent for credit accumulation, and 0 percent for other outcomes.

Summary and Discussion

At this interim stage, Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services in the first year of the study — the 2012-2013 school year — had a small impact on chronic absenteeism: a higher percentage of case-managed students than non-case-managed students were chronically absent from school (that is, they had attendance rates of 90 percent or lower). Case management did not have a statistically significant impact on the percentage of students failing at least one core course. Case management did not lead to notable differences in average attendance rate, credit earning, course performance, or suspensions between the case-managed students and their non-case-managed counterparts. In general, the mediating outcomes of case-managed and non-case-managed students were also similar. However, the positive and statistically significant impacts on friend quality and students' relationships with caring adults outside of home or school suggest that Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services may be starting to help students form more trusting connections and networks of support with peers and adults. The impacts on these outcomes are consistent with implementation findings reported in Chapter 4 that case-managed students were more involved in several types of organized support run by adults, particularly for groups of students, compared with their non-case-managed peers. The implementation research also found that more case-managed students reported being connected to programs outside of school for support.

As explained in the first chapter, this is an interim report, the first of two reports investigating the implementation and impact of Communities In Schools Level 2 case-managed services. The next report will present the impact of case management on student outcomes after two years — the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. Some of the findings in this report suggest theories for why case management might or might not improve the outcomes of students after two years. The participating study schools tend to have many and various services available to students, and non-case-managed students have access to many of the same kinds of services to which case-managed students do. In some cases, those services may even be Level 1 services provided or coordinated by Communities In Schools. In these school environments, the case management provided by site coordinators may not be able to create supportive experiences that are different enough from the widely available services to result in improved outcomes for students on their caseloads.

Additionally, there does not appear to be much service differentiation between high-risk and moderate-risk case-managed students. Given that the high-risk students are more likely to have ongoing struggles with absenteeism, behavior, and school performance, and that they do not seem to consistently receive more intensive services, it may prove difficult to shift these students onto a more positive educational trajectory. Finally, although the differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed students on the primary and secondary outcomes are not statistically significant (with one exception), they all suggest slightly better outcomes for the

non-case-managed group on average. This consistency favoring the non-case-managed group suggests that another year of case management may not be enough to have a positive effect on student outcomes.

However, it could be that a second year of case management will yield positive impacts for students. Students and site coordinators may need time working together for student behaviors and attitudes to shift, and, ultimately, for student outcomes to improve. Site coordinators may also need more time to remove nonacademic or structural barriers to students' success (for example, helping resolve a complicated home situation). More time may allow site coordinators to strengthen their relationships with the students on their caseloads and learn more about the extent and nature of their needs, allowing them to better target services and calibrate their intensity. Furthermore, as discussed earlier in this section, there is evidence that case-managed students, in comparison with non-case-managed students, are forming more supportive connections with both adults and peers. If these relationships are sustained for more than one school year, they could result in improved outcomes for these students. It may also be that students need to reach and pass service receipt thresholds for the benefits of those services to emerge, which may take more time; one year of support may simply not be enough. Some research on other student support programs that found no impacts or negative impacts on student outcomes like attendance and academic performance after one year did find positive impacts after two or more years. Among the hypotheses for why these impacts emerged later was that students needed to adjust to the higher expectations being placed on them.[6]

Suggestions for Continuous Improvement

Although the evaluation study of Communities In Schools Level 2 case management is ongoing, the research about one year of case management services suggests some areas where Communities In Schools may want to consider change and to which similar service providers should be attentive in planning their delivery of services.

- Overall, the implementation research suggests that the participating schools and affiliates follow the same steps in the case management process — a noteworthy finding given Communities In Schools' expansive national network. However, these schools and affiliates varied in how they implemented each step. In particular, site coordinators' ongoing assessment of students' needs and their use of data collected as part of the monitoring process may benefit from greater consistency across schools. Communities In Schools'

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[6]For example, see the evaluations of the Higher Achievement Program (Herrera, Grossman, and Linden 2013) and AVID (Dunn et al. 2010), as well as the summary report about integrated student services from Moore et al. (2014), which suggests that the impact of such services may need time to emerge.

national office could consider suggesting best practices for the network regarding how and with what kind of data site coordinators assess students' ongoing needs throughout the year. In addition, site coordinators may benefit from additional support regarding how to use these ongoing assessment data to ensure that services are continually adjusted to address students' needs and increase the likelihood of improvements in student outcomes.

- Recognizing that some students have more intensive needs than others, Communities In Schools may want to develop additional guidelines regarding the relationship between levels of service and student needs. Even though site coordinators indicated in interviews that they varied the level of attention paid to different students based on their perceived needs, the analyses of service receipt in this study showed considerable similarity in the frequency and kinds of services received by high-risk and moderate-risk students. Site coordinators might benefit from more guidance on assessing levels of student risk or need and identifying appropriate levels of service in response. The implication is that site coordinators would focus more time and energy on the most struggling students, making sure that they get adequate attention, and spend less time with the moderate-risk students. Such service differentiation, if standardized within the Communities In Schools model, would in effect result in a three-level service model.

- The schools in this study have a range of services in place to help students be more successful, including broadly available Level 1 service coordination by Communities In Schools site coordinators. In such schools, it may be more challenging for Level 2 case management to make a difference above and beyond the services (Level 1 or otherwise) that already exist. Therefore, it may be beneficial for Communities In Schools to consider where it can add the greatest value in each school and how that may change over time. Perhaps in schools with many services already available to students, Communities In Schools should focus their efforts on providing Level 2 case-managed services only to the students most in need and focus much less, if at all, on Level 1 services. In schools with relatively few school-wide supports, Communities In Schools may be able to add substantial value by having site coordinators spend more time on Level 1 services. The Communities In Schools national office may be in a position to provide guidance to affiliates on finding an appropriate balance between Level 1 and Level 2 services so that the program can maximize its value in each school.

Next Steps for the Study of Case Management

The research activities that are part of this study have continued, and the results from ongoing analyses will be shared in a second report. The next report will build on and complement this report in three ways:

- **Two-year impacts.** Similar student data on primary, secondary, and mediating outcomes are being collected for the 2013-2014 school year. The analysis of these data will result in two-year impact findings that better assess the effectiveness of case management, given that most students on a site coordinator's caseload receive case-managed services for more than one year. Preliminary data suggest that about two-thirds of the 2012-2013 case-managed students in our sample continued to receive case management in 2013-2014.

- **Additional implementation findings.** The second report will include more implementation information, creating an opportunity to see whether the case management experience for students changed over the course of two years. It will again include information about service provision and receipt, as well as the contrast between the services accessed by case-managed and by non-case-managed students. New implementation data collected during the 2013-2014 school year will make it possible for the next report to discuss the alignment of the types of services provided to students with the specific needs students have. It will discuss the roles of Communities In Schools' community partners and the nature of their partnerships with the local affiliates and school sites. To further understand the contrast that site coordinator case management might make in student service provision, the report will present more information about the work of guidance counselors and social workers, the school staff members most comparable to Communities In Schools site coordinators in the work that they do.

- **Variation.** Furthermore, the next report will investigate variation across school sites in terms of both implementation and impacts and the associations between the two. This analysis may generate lessons about what kinds of contexts and implementation characteristics are associated with positive impacts on student outcomes.

The additional findings in the next report may also lead to further programmatic considerations for Communities In Schools and other integrated student service providers.

Appendix A

Statistical Model and Statistical Power

This appendix discusses various technical issues related to the estimation of program impacts. The first section provides the statistical model used to estimate the impact of Communities In Schools case management on student outcomes. The second section discusses the minimum detectable effect size for the main impact findings in the study. The final section presents impact estimates that are not adjusted for students' baseline characteristics.

Statistical Model for Estimating Impacts

The impact of Communities In Schools case management on student outcomes is estimated by fitting the following regression model to the relevant analysis sample (the school records analysis sample or the student survey analysis sample):

$$Y_i = \beta T_i + \sum_K \lambda_k B_{ki} + \sum_S \delta_s X_{si} + \sum_S \omega_s M_{si} + \varepsilon_i, \tag{1}$$

where:

Y_i = the outcome of interest for student i

T_i = one if student i was assigned to the case-managed group and zero otherwise

B_{ki} = a set of K random assignment block indicators, equal to one if student i is in random assignment block k and zero otherwise

X_{si} = a set of S baseline characteristics for student i

M_i = a set of S missing indicators for each of the student characteristics, coded one if missing and zero otherwise

ε_i = a within-student error term.

Therefore:

β = the estimated impact of case management on outcome Y.

The block indicators are included in the model to capture a central feature of the research design in which random assignment was conducted separately for each school.[1] Controlling for random assignment blocks in the model also accounts for the clustering of

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[1]In one site, random assignment was also conducted by grade level and gender because a specific number of boys and girls in each grade had to be served. In total, there are 34 random assignment blocks in the full study sample and the student survey analysis sample, and 31 blocks in the school records analysis sample. There are fewer blocks in the latter sample because school records data are not available for one school district (and therefore this district is excluded from the sample).

student outcomes by school, because it explains all of the between-school variation in student outcomes.[2]

Controlling for students' baseline characteristics is not necessary for obtaining unbiased impact estimates, because random assignment should ensure that the program and control groups have similar observed and unobserved characteristics at baseline.[3] However, controlling for student characteristics can increase the *precision* of the impact estimates, because these characteristics explain part of the within-block variation in the outcome measure. Controlling for student characteristics can also be used as a "safeguard" to ensure that the treatment and control group are comparable on all characteristics.[4] (As a point of reference, unadjusted impact estimates are presented later in this appendix.)

The statistical significance of impact estimates (and other estimates) in this report is assessed using a two-tailed t-test. *Statistical significance* is a measure of the degree of certainty that one may have that a program's impact is actually nonzero. If an impact estimate is statistically significant, then one may conclude with some confidence that the program really had an effect on the outcome being assessed. If an impact estimate is not statistically significant, then the nonzero estimate is more likely to be a product of chance. In this report, statistical significance is based on a significance level of 10 percent.

Finally, it is important to note that the impact estimates presented in this report are "intent to treat" estimates of the effect of Communities In Schools case management. About one in ten students assigned to case management did not receive the intended services. Thus, the findings in this report represent the estimated impact of *offering* case management to students ("intent to treat"), rather than the impact of case management on students who actually received the intended services ("treatment on the treated"). Because students' participation in educational

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[2]The random assignment ratio differs across blocks (minimum = 0.27, maximum = 0.72, median = 0.51, in the full study sample). These differences in the random assignment ratio must be accounted for to obtain an unbiased estimate of impacts. There are several ways to account for variation in the random assignment ratio. The two most common are to (a) "block-mean" center the covariates on the right-hand side of the model or (b) include block fixed effects in the model. Raudenbush (2009) shows that these two methods produce the same impact estimate. This model is based on the latter approach.

[3]The following covariates are included in the statistical model: whether the student has English as a second language (ESL), whether the student is qualified for a gifted program, whether the student is eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the student's race/ethnicity and gender, and a baseline measure of the outcome variable. These covariates were chosen because they are strong predictors of academic achievement; the decision about which covariates to include in the model was made before starting the impact analysis.

[4]In particular, when differences between the treatment and control group are between 0.05 and 0.25 standard deviations (as they are in this study; see Appendix B), the What Works Clearinghouse recommends that these characteristics be included as covariates in the impact model (What Works Clearinghouse 2014).

interventions is typically voluntary, intent-to-treat estimates of the impact of offering a program or service are relevant to policy.[5]

Minimum Detectable Effect Sizes

This section examines how large the impact of Communities In Schools case management would have to be for the evaluation to be able to detect it. A common way to convey a study's statistical power is through the minimum detectable effect (MDE) or the minimum detectable effect size (MDES). Formally, the MDE is the smallest true program impact that can be detected with a reasonable degree of power (in this case, 80 percent) for a given level of statistical significance (in this case, 10 percent for a two-tailed test). The MDES is the MDE scaled as an effect size — in other words, it is the MDE divided by the standard deviation of the outcome of interest. Effect sizes are used widely for measuring the impacts of educational programs and are defined in terms of the underlying population's standard deviation of student achievement. For example, an MDES of 0.20 indicates that an impact estimator can reliably detect a program-induced increase in student achievement that is equal to or greater than the 0.20 standard deviation of the existing student distribution.

The MDE and MDES for a study are a function of the standard error of the estimated program impact:[6]

$$MDE = M_{N-B-X} * s.e.(\hat{\beta}) \tag{2a}$$

$$MDES = M_{N-B-X} * \frac{s.e.(\hat{\beta})}{\sigma} \tag{2b}$$

where:

$s.e.(\hat{\beta})$ = the standard error of the impact estimate

σ = the standard deviation that is used to calculate effect sizes (for example, in this study, it is the standard deviation for the non-case-managed group)

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[5]The estimated effect of the "treatment on the treated" in the student survey analysis sample can be obtained by dividing the "intent to treat" impact estimates presented in this report by 86.8 percent, which is the difference (after rounding) in the percentage of students in the case-managed group who actually received services (88.9 percent) and the percentage of students in the non-case-managed group who received case management services (2 percent). For the student records analysis sample, the divisor is 88.8 percent, calculated from the corresponding figures of 90.7 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively. See Bloom (2006) for a discussion.

[6]This is because the standard error of the impact estimate is what determines whether the impact estimate is statistically significant.

N = the number of students in the sample

B = the number of random assignment blocks in the impact analysis

X = the number of student baseline characteristics and missing-data indicator variables included as covariates in the impact model (see previous section)

M_{N-B-X} = the "degrees of freedom" multiplier, which is calculated to be 2.5 in this study, assuming a two-tailed test with a statistical power level 0.80 and a statistical significance level of 0.10.

Appendix Table A.1 presents the MDES for the school records outcomes in this report, including the two primary outcomes (chronic absenteeism and course failure). As shown in this table, the study is able to detect an effect of 4 percentage points on chronic absenteeism (an effect size of 0.11) and an effect of 4.6 percentage points on the percentage of students who fail at least one course (an effect size of 0.10).

Unadjusted Impact Estimates

As explained earlier, the statistical model used to estimate impacts controls for several measures of students' baseline characteristics and prior achievement (see Equation 1). Although it is not strictly necessary to control for these baseline characteristics when using a random assignment design, the main impact analysis does so in order to improve the precision of the impact estimates. Controlling for students' baseline characteristics should not appreciably affect the estimated impact — but it should reduce its standard error.

To confirm that this is true, Appendix Table A.2 compares the estimated impacts on school records outcomes from Chapter 5 (which are adjusted for student baseline characteristics) with impact estimates that are adjusted for blocking only (not adjusted for student characteristics). The table also shows the standard error of these impact estimates. As expected, controlling for student characteristics does not affect the magnitude of the impact estimates, but it does decrease their standard error. The extent to which controlling for student characteristics reduces the standard error varies across outcomes — from a reduction of 0.1 percent in the standard error for the impact on chronic absenteeism to a reduction of 2.1 percent in the standard error average for the impact on the average attendance rate.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Appendix Table A.1

**Minimum Detectable Effect and Effect Size
for Impacts on Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for the
School Records Analysis Sample**

Outcome	Number of Students	MDE	MDES
Primary outcomes			
Chronic absenteeism[a] (%)	1,667	4.01	0.11
Failed at least 1 core course (%)	2,048	4.57	0.10
School progress[b]			
Core credit accumulation for graduation (%)	865	1.24	0.15
Student behavior			
Average attendance rate (%)	1,667	0.74	0.10
Suspensions (#)	1,935	0.29	0.10
Academic achievement			
Average core course marks (%)	2,048	0.67	0.09

SOURCES: MDRC calculations based on student records obtained from school districts.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the school records analysis sample, which includes all students with course failure data for the 2012-2013 school year (one study district is excluded from this sample because student records data for this school year are not available).

   The minimum detectable effect (MDE) and minimum detectable effect size (MDES) in this table are calculated based on the standard error of the impact estimate (adjusted for random assignment blocks and student baseline characteristics) and the number of students in the school records analysis sample. A statistical significance level of 10 percent is assumed. The MDES is calculated by dividing the MDE by the standard deviation of the outcome measure for students in the school records analysis sample who are in the non-case-managed group.

   [a]A student is considered chronically absent if he or she has an attendance rate below 90 percent.

   [b]This outcome is for high school students only; the state-level graduation requirements for the four core subjects are used in this calculation. A student can be expected to accumulate around 25 percent of core credits in each year of high school.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Appendix Table A.2

**Estimated Impacts on Student Academic and Behavorial Outcomes for the School Records
Analysis Sample, Adjusted and Unadjusted for Student Characteristics**

Outcome	Adjusted for Blocking and Full Set of Student Characteristics[a]			Adjusted for Blocking Only		
	Estimated Impact (S.E.)	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Impact	Estimated Impact (S.E.)	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Impact
Primary outcomes						
Chronic absenteeism[b] (%)	3.09 *	0.09	0.056	3.03 *	0.08	0.061
	(1.614)			(1.616)		
Failed at least 1 core course (%)	2.03	0.04	0.270	1.95	0.04	0.289
	(1.837)			(1.840)		
School progress[c]						
Core credit accumulation for graduation (%)	-0.15	-0.02	0.768	-0.28	-0.03	0.572
	(0.497)			(0.496)		
Student behavior						
Average attendance rate (%)	-0.36	-0.05	0.220	-0.29	-0.04	0.330
	(0.296)			(0.302)		
Number of suspensions	0.16	0.06	0.164	0.15	0.05	0.190
	(0.116)			(0.118)		
Academic achievement						
Average core course marks (%)	-0.42	-0.05	0.118	-0.43	-0.06	0.114
	(0.270)			(0.273)		
Sample size[d]	2048			2048		

(continued)

Appendix Table A.2 (continued)

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on student records obtained from school districts.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the school records analysis sample, which includes all students with course failure data for the 2012-2013 school year (one study district is excluded from this sample because student records data for this school year are not available).

All estimated impacts are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school and grade level.

"S.E." indicates standard error, given in parentheses.

Effect sizes are calculated by dividing the impact estimate by the standard deviation of the outcome measure for students in the school records analysis sample who are in the non-case-managed group.

Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

[a]Estimated impacts are adjusted for blocking and the following variables: race, gender, free or reduced-price lunch status, English as a second language, whether qualified for a gifted program, and a baseline measure of the outcome variable.

[b]A student is considered to be chronically absent if he or she has an attendance rate below 90 percent.

[c]This outcome is for high school students only; the state-level graduation requirements for the four core subjects are used in this calculation. A student can be expected to accumulate around 25 percent of core credits in each year of high school.

[d]The sample size reported in the table is for the full school records analysis sample. However, the sample size varies across outcomes due to missing data. The percentage of missing data is 19 percent for attendance rates and absenteeism, 6 percent for suspensions, 1 percent for credit accumulation, and 0 percent for other outcomes.

Appendix B

Sample and Response Analysis

This appendix provides additional information about varying samples of students and response rates. The three exhibits for this appendix show how the different student analysis samples were formed, provide baseline characteristics for the full study sample, and give response rates for both the case-managed and non-case-managed students based on information source.

Appendix Figure B.1 shows how the original pool of students recruited for participation in the evaluation was reduced to the samples of students whose data were analyzed in this report. The eligibility pool of 2,578 represents all recruited students whose parents consented to their participation in Communities In Schools case management.[1] To provide all students with the same opportunity to receive Communities In Schools case-managed services, MDRC implemented a random assignment process that assigned students to one of three groups: a case-managed group to fill open caseload slots in participating schools (1,179 students), a non-case-managed control group (1,118 students), and a "wait-list" group (281 students who could fill caseload slots that might open up during the course of the school year but who would *not* participate in the research activities and *not* be included in any analyses). Sixty-seven of the students assigned to the first two groups were removed from the study sample either because they had consented to participate only in Communities In Schools case management and not in the evaluation or because they had exited their participating school after having submitted a consent form but before random assignment had been conducted.[2] This left a *study sample* of 1,140 case-managed students and 1,090 non-case-managed students, or a total of 2,230 students.

Of this student sample, many students responded to surveys administered at the end of the 2012-2013 school year: the *student survey analysis sample*. Of the 2,230 students in the study sample, only 137 students did not respond to the survey. Also, school records data was obtained for many of the students in the study sample: the *school records analysis sample*. The study team was unable to obtain records data for only 182 of the study students; most of these students were from one school district from which the study team was unable to obtain the necessary data for this report. There is a great amount of overlap of these two analysis samples: 88.7 percent of the study sample is represented in both analysis samples, including 86.8 percent of case-managed students and 90.6 percent of non-case-managed students.

Appendix Table B.1 presents the baseline characteristics of the 2,230 students in the full study sample. Similar to the information provided in the report about the analysis samples, the

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[1]Students who were 18 years of age or older — adults — were able to sign consent for themselves and did not need parental consent to participate.

[2]Although these students exited schools before random assignment, the research team was not informed about their exits until after random assignment occurred.

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Appendix Figure B.1

Creation of the Student Analysis Samples

Eligibility pool

Eligible students
N=2,578

Randomly assigned to wait list
(never included in research
activities)
N=281

Random assignment

Randomly assigned to
case-managed (CM)
group
N=1,179

Randomly assigned to
non-case-managed
(non-CM) group
N=1,118

No consent to
participate in study
N=35
Exited school during
random assignment
process
N=4

No consent to
participate in study
N=21
Exited school during
random assignment
process
N=7

Study sample assigned to
CM group
N=1,140

Study sample assigned
to non-CM group
N=1,090

Full study sample

Full study sample
N=2,230

**Deriving the student survey
analysis sample**

**Deriving the school records analysis
sample**

CM students without follow-up survey
N=82
Non-CM students without follow-up
survey
N=55

CM students without school records
N=111
Non-CM students without school records
N=71

CM students with
spring follow-up
survey in first year
N=1,058

Non-CM students
with spring follow-up
survey in first year
N=1,035

CM students with
school records in first
year
N=1,029

Non-CM students
with school records in
first year
N=1,019

Student survey analysis sample
in first year
N=2,093

School records analysis sample
in first year
N=2,048

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Appendix Table B.1

Baseline Characteristics of Students in the Full Study Sample

Characteristic	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Difference
Race/ethnicity (%)					0.269
Hispanic	60.8	60.0	0.8	0.02	
Black, non-Hispanic	34.8	33.6	1.2	0.03	
White, non-Hispanic	2.1	3.2	-1.1	-0.07	
Asian	1.3	1.9	-0.6	-0.05	
Other	0.9	1.3	-0.4	-0.04	
Male (%)	45.0	44.4	0.6	0.01	0.759
Eligible for free/reduced-price lunch (%)	54.6	52.2	2.4	0.05 *	0.078
English as a second language (%)	11.8	11.3	0.5	0.01	0.722
Student qualifies for gifted program (%)	2.8	3.4	-0.6	-0.03	0.422
Chronically absent (%)	9.9	9.3	0.6	0.02	0.644
Average attendance rate (%)	95.7	95.7	0.0	-0.01	0.843
Failed at least 1 core course (%)	26.3	26.2	0.2	0.00	0.932
Average core course marks (%)	80.0	80.3	-0.3	-0.04	0.427
Household makeup[a] (%)					
Lives with 2 or more parents/guardians	54.4	51.8	2.6	0.05	0.220
Lives with 1 parent/guardian	39.0	40.7	-1.7	-0.03	0.427
Lives with 1 or more grandparent(s)	7.4	9.1	-1.7	-0.06	0.161
Lives with his/her own child	2.6	2.5	0.1	0.01	0.909
Language predominantly spoken at home[b] (%)					
English	76.8	76.6	0.1	0.00	0.940
Not English	23.2	23.4	-0.1	0.00	0.940
Parent educational attainment (%)					
Father					0.523
Not a high school graduate	17.7	20.7	-3.1	-0.08	
High school graduate or GED recipient	25.9	22.8	3.1	0.07	
College graduate or higher	12.0	13.9	-2.0	-0.06	
Don't know	44.5	42.5	2.0	0.04	
Mother					0.762
Not a high school graduate	18.3	21.0	-2.8	-0.07	
High school graduate or GED recipient	28.3	28.2	0.1	0.00	
College graduate or higher	23.6	23.8	-0.2	-0.01	
Don't know	29.9	27.0	2.9	0.06	

(continued)

Appendix Table B.1 (continued)

Characteristic	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	Effect Size	P-Value for Estimated Difference
Did any siblings leave high school before graduation?[c] (%)					
None left high school	63.9	65.7	-1.8	-0.04	0.483
At least 1 left high school	36.1	34.3	1.8	0.04	0.483
Student engagement with school (1-4)[d]	2.84	2.87	-0.03	-0.04	0.370
How far would you like to go in school with your education? (%)					0.860
Some high school	0.6	1.2	-0.5	-0.05	
Finish high school	12.0	9.3	2.7	0.09	
Some college or trade/technical school	6.4	5.7	0.7	0.03	
Finish college or trade/technical school	44.5	45.1	-0.7	-0.01	
Graduate school after college	29.7	31.6	-1.9	-0.04	
Don't know	6.8	7.2	-0.4	-0.01	
How far do you think you will actually go in school or with your education? (%)					0.733
Some high school	1.8	1.0	0.8	0.08	
Finish high school	12.8	12.7	0.1	0.00	
Some college or trade/technical school	10.9	10.7	0.1	0.00	
Finish college or trade/technical school	38.1	40.9	-2.8	-0.06	
Graduate school after college	25.0	25.8	-0.8	-0.02	
Don't know	11.5	8.9	2.5	0.09	
Caring adult at home (1-4)[e]	3.38	3.40	-0.03	-0.05	0.246
Caring adult at school (1-4)[f]	3.30	3.28	0.02	0.03	0.516
Caring adult outside of home or school (1-4)[g]	3.46	3.49	-0.03	-0.05	0.249
Joint test of difference between groups					0.985
Sample size[h] (N = 2,230)	1,140	1,090			

(continued)

case-managed and non-case-managed students are highly similar across all the measured characteristics, as indicated by the p-value of 0.985 for the overall test of difference. Also, the case-managed and non-case-managed groups' values on these baseline characteristics are very similar to the values presented separately for each analysis sample in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 of the report.

Appendix Table B.2 compares the response rates of the case-managed and non-case-managed students on the survey and gives the percentage of students in each of those two groups for whom school records data were obtained. Overall, the rates of response for these two

Appendix Table B.1 (continued)

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the full study sample, which includes all students who agreed to participate in the study and were randomly assigned. Due to small numbers, percentages for the Native American demographic group are not included in the table.

   The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school. The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed means for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted means for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed distribution of the case-managed group across random assignment blocks as the basis for the adjustment.

   Effect sizes are calculated by dividing the estimated difference by the standard deviation of the characteristic for students in the full study sample who are in the non-case-managed group.

   Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

   A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between the case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

   [a]These survey categories are not mutually exclusive.

   [b]Of those students who responded that English was not the predominant language at home, 92 percent reported speaking Spanish at home.

   [c]Respondents without siblings old enough for high school are omitted.

   [d]Scale based on responses to survey questions 13a-13e, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.83.

   [e]Scale based on responses to survey questions 6a-6g, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.81.

   [f]Scale based on responses to survey questions 12a-12f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.89.

   [g]Scale based on responses to survey questions 10a-10f, ranging from 1 = "not at all true" to 4 = "very much true." Cronbach's alpha = 0.89.

   [h]Due to missing values, the number of students included varies by characteristic. The sample size reported here is for the full study sample. The average percentage of missing data on any given characteristic is 11 percent and ranges from 0 percent to 35 percent. The percentage of missing data is high on some characteristics because baseline school records data from the prior school year are not available for students in one of the districts in the study sample.

data sources were high — over 90 percent in both cases. The differential response rates between the case-managed and non-case-managed students are small, with less than a 2 percentage point difference for each data source. Although the 1.8 percentage point difference in the survey response rate was statistically significant, it is small and is characterized as "low differential attrition" based on the current standards of the What Works Clearinghouse. These standards indicate that for overall attrition of 10 percent (which is slightly more attrition than for this sample), a difference between experimental groups of less than 6.3 percentage points qualifies as "low attrition."[3]

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[3]What Works Clearinghouse (2014).

Evaluation of Communities In Schools

Appendix Table B.2

Study Sample Response Rates, by Follow-Up Data Source and Group

Data Source for Outcomes (%)	Case-Managed Group	Non-Case-Managed Group	Estimated Difference	P-Value for Estimated Difference
Spring 2013 follow-up student survey	92.8	94.6	-1.8 *	0.069
School records data (2012-2013)	90.3	91.3	-1.0	0.209
Sample size (N=2,230)	1,140	1,090		

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on the spring 2013 follow-up student survey and student records obtained from school districts for the 2012-2013 school year.

NOTES: The analyses reported in this table are based on the full study sample, which includes all students who agreed to participate in the study and who were randomly assigned. The estimated differences between the case-managed group and the non-case-managed group are regression adjusted using ordinary least squares, controlling for random assignment blocks by school. The values in the column labeled "Case-Managed Group" are the observed response rate for students randomly assigned to the case-managed group. The "Non-Case-Managed Group" values are the regression-adjusted response rates for students randomly assigned to the non-case-managed group, using the observed distribution of the case-managed group across random assignment blocks as the basis for the adjustment.

 Rounding may cause slight discrepancies in calculating sums and differences.

 A two-tailed t-test was applied to differences between case-managed and non-case-managed groups. Statistical significance levels are indicated as: *** = 1 percent; ** = 5 percent; * = 10 percent.

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About MDRC

MDRC is a nonprofit, nonpartisan social and education policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve the well-being of low-income people. Through its research and the active communication of its findings, MDRC seeks to enhance the effectiveness of social and education policies and programs.

Founded in 1974 and located in New York City and Oakland, California, MDRC is best known for mounting rigorous, large-scale, real-world tests of new and existing policies and programs. Its projects are a mix of demonstrations (field tests of promising new program approaches) and evaluations of ongoing government and community initiatives. MDRC's staff bring an unusual combination of research and organizational experience to their work, providing expertise on the latest in qualitative and quantitative methods and on program design, development, implementation, and management. MDRC seeks to learn not just whether a program is effective but also how and why the program's effects occur. In addition, it tries to place each project's findings in the broader context of related research — in order to build knowledge about what works across the social and education policy fields. MDRC's findings, lessons, and best practices are proactively shared with a broad audience in the policy and practitioner community as well as with the general public and the media.

Over the years, MDRC has brought its unique approach to an ever-growing range of policy areas and target populations. Once known primarily for evaluations of state welfare-to-work programs, today MDRC is also studying public school reforms, employment programs for ex-offenders and people with disabilities, and programs to help low-income students succeed in college. MDRC's projects are organized into five areas:

- Promoting Family Well-Being and Children's Development
- Improving Public Education
- Raising Academic Achievement and Persistence in College
- Supporting Low-Wage Workers and Communities
- Overcoming Barriers to Employment

Working in almost every state, all of the nation's largest cities, and Canada and the United Kingdom, MDRC conducts its projects in partnership with national, state, and local governments, public school systems, community organizations, and numerous private philanthropies.