



# CENTER FOR SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Building capacity. Strengthening systems. Transforming lives.

## 2023-2024 Year in Review

At Center for Schools and Communities (CSC), we are dedicated to making a positive impact on the lives of children – from birth to career – and their families. Since 1988, we have worked to strengthen systems and improve outcomes for schools and communities through a range of initiatives and experiences in professional learning, support services, resource development and evaluation.

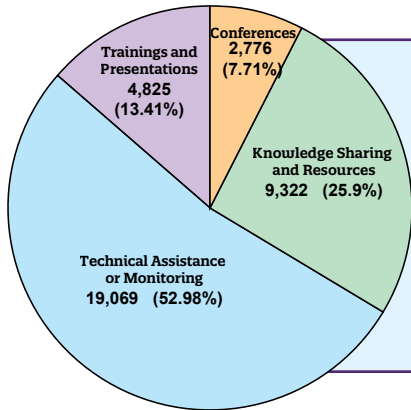
### Core Values

Service to Others

Equity in Action

Passion for Excellence

Innovation for Growth



### Participants Served by CSC by Type of Service, 2023-2024\*

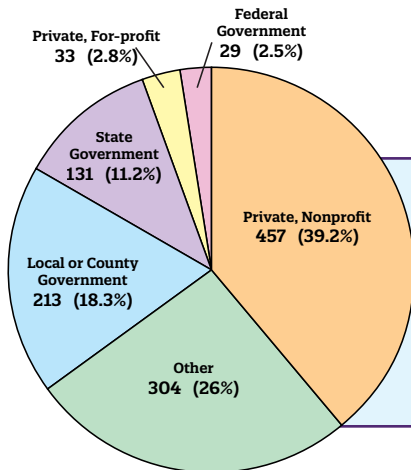
CSC provided technical assistance and monitoring to 19,069 participants which was 52.98% of our services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

CSC provided knowledge sharing or resources (including learning communities, podcasts, email newsletters, public awareness campaigns, networking meetings) to 9,322 participants which was 25.9% of our services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

2,776 participants attended our conferences, which was 7.71% of our services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

CSC provided training and presentations (including webinar series, presentations at state and national conferences) to 4,825 participants which was 13.41% of our services for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

\*Note: Participant counts are duplicated and include 1) the number of participants who are directly served by a program or service or attended a conference or event; and 2) the number of individuals who have been impacted by a CSC service. For example, if guidance counselors are trained about school safety, then the entire school's enrollment is included in the participant total as they benefit from the counselors' increased knowledge as a result of the training.



### Profile of Attendees at CSC-hosted Conferences

CSC served more than 1,500 professionals in its conferences in 2023-2024. Professionals span government, education, nonprofit and for-profit sectors, and various levels of experience.

### Conference Registrants by Primary Employer Type

457 professionals (39.2% of respondents) indicated that they worked in the private, nonprofit sector.

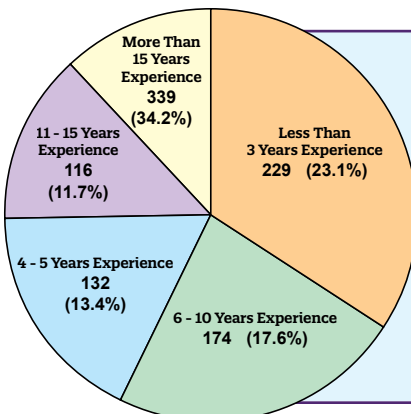
304 professionals (26% of respondents) indicated that they worked in another sector.

213 professionals (18.3% of respondents) indicated that they worked in local or county government.

131 professionals (11.2% of respondents) indicated that they worked in state government.

33 professionals (2.8% of respondents) indicated that they worked in the private, for-profit sector.

29 professionals (2.5% of respondents) indicated that they worked in federal government.



### Conference Registrants by Years of Experience

339 professionals (34.2% of respondents) indicated that they have more than 15 years of experience in their area of work.

229 professionals (23.1% of respondents) indicated that they have less than 3 years of experience in their area of work.

174 professionals (17.6% of respondents) indicated that they have 6-10 years of experience in their area of work.

132 professionals (13.4% of respondents) indicated that they have 4-5 years of experience in their area of work.

116 professionals (11.7% of respondents) indicated that they have 11-15 years of experience in their area of work.

CSC develops and offers a wide range of research-based online and in-person professional learning opportunities, including workshops, multi-session courses, conferences and certifications.



**Building capacity of OST leaders**

In 2023-2024, approximately 155 out-of-school time (OST) programs received Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) program grants to provide academic, artistic and cultural enrichment opportunities for students and their families.

In February 2024, CSC provided the 17-member 21st CCLC Advisory board with professional development for administrators to gain vital tools for navigating challenges, discover strategies to honor boundaries, reassess expectations, foster mental health, and create a healthier work-life dynamic.

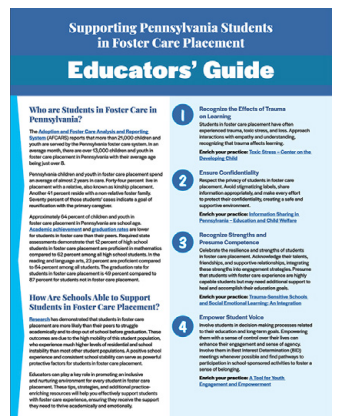
#PassionForExcellence

**Providing resources to educators serving students experiencing foster care**

In recognition of National Foster Care Month in May, in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, CSC developed “Supporting Pennsylvania Students in Foster Care Placement Educators’ Guide.” as part of statewide work to ensure educational stability and education outcomes for students in foster care placement.

Educators can play a key role in promoting an inclusive and nurturing environment. These tips, strategies and resources help educators effectively support students with foster care experience, ensuring they receive the support they need to thrive academically and emotionally.

#PassionForExcellence



[View Educators’ Guide PDF](#)

**CSC Initiatives**

**CENTER FOR SAFE SCHOOLS**  
Visit [CenterForSafeSchools.org](http://CenterForSafeSchools.org)

**ICPS**  
I CAN PROBLEM SOLVE  
Visit [ICanProblemSolve.org](http://ICanProblemSolve.org)

**parents as teachers**  
Pennsylvania  
Visit [PAParentsAsTeachers.org](http://PAParentsAsTeachers.org)

**pennsylvania**  
STATEWIDE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY NETWORK  
Visit [Diakon-Swan.org/SwanHelpline](http://Diakon-Swan.org/SwanHelpline)

**CPSEL**  
Center for the Promotion of Social and Emotional Learning  
Visit [CPSEL.org](http://CPSEL.org)

**Pennsylvania Children’s Trust Fund**  
Visit [PACTF.org](http://PACTF.org)

**PENNSYLVANIA strengthening families**  
Visit [PAStrengtheningFamilies.org](http://PAStrengtheningFamilies.org)

**ELECT**  
Education Leading to Employment and Career Training  
Visit [ELECT.center-school.org](http://ELECT.center-school.org)

## Discussions with the Director From Migrant Student to Entrepreneur: A Journey of Resilience and Success



Shileste Overton Morris, Ed.D.  
Director  
Center for Schools and Communities



Samantha Ramirez-Herrera  
Storyteller, Filmmaker, Writer  
Offtharecord

[Watch "From Migrant Student to Entrepreneur"](#)



[Visit Refugee Education Program website](#)

## Navigating pathways to a brighter future for migrant students and their families

More than 350 Migrant Education Program staff, English Learner (EL) teachers, social workers, and staff from community-based organizations attended the 2024 Migrant Education Program Conference.

Attendees explored using social media for recruitment, engaging migrant communities in STEM, holding restorative circles, serving out-of-school youth, and ensuring equity for migrant students.

In a tour of a nearby mushroom facility, attendees experienced "A Day in the Life of a Migrant Worker." Closing keynote speaker Samantha Ramirez shared her first-generation American story in her address "Borderless Dreams."

**#EquityInAction**

## Expanding services to schools and organizations serving refugees

Pennsylvania's Refugee Education Program, administered by Pennsylvania Department of Education, assists refugee students and families to assimilate to the school and community in a culturally and linguistically competent manner.

In 2023-2024 CSC expanded its services to schools and organizations serving refugee students and their families. Nearly 300 professionals participated in fall 2023 and spring 2024 webinar series on topics such as culturally responsive family engagement for Afghan refugee families and understanding trauma and fostering resilience when working with Afghan refugee students and their families.

**#EquityInAction**

Education Stability for Children and Youth  
in Foster Care in Pennsylvania

[Visit PAFosterCare.org](http://Visit PAFosterCare.org)



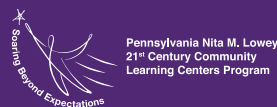
[Visit MEP.center-school.org](http://Visit MEP.center-school.org)



[Visit PSAYDN.org](http://Visit PSAYDN.org)

Pennsylvania  
**ECYEH** Education for Children and Youth  
Experiencing Homelessness

[Visit ECYHPennsylvania.center-school.org](http://Visit ECYHPennsylvania.center-school.org)



[Visit 21stCCLC.center-school.org](http://Visit 21stCCLC.center-school.org)

**Refugee  
Education  
Program**

[Visit PARefugeeEducationProgram.org](http://Visit PARefugeeEducationProgram.org)



*Let's Work  
Together!*

CSC provides in-depth support for the successful implementation and operation of school- and community-based programs. This support includes subject matter technical assistance, tools and resources.



**Discussions with the Director**  
Supporting Expectant and Parenting Students

[Watch ELECT Discussions with the Director](#)



[Visit I Can Problem Solve website](#)

## Supporting expectant and parenting students for academic and life success

CSC supported professionals working with expectant and parenting students in Pennsylvania school districts by assisting with 522 technical issues and training, 25 professional development opportunities, access to learning communities, and data management and support.

Across all ELECT programs, 2,281 expectant or parenting students were supported in 2023-2024. Of those, 80% earned a GPA of 2.0 or above or showed academic improvement if their GPA was under 2.0, and 81% ended the year with 25% or less absences or showed an attendance improvement.

This academic improvement and support led to 126% of participants eligible for graduation achieving graduation or high school equivalence (HSE) by the end of their senior year.

**#EquityInAction**

## Facilitating international implementation of I Can Problem Solve curriculum

I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) is a universal, evidence-based, social and emotional learning (SEL) program designed to build interpersonal thinking and problem-solving skills for children, ages 4-11.

Partnering with the Dorset Council in Dorset, U.K., CSC provided lesson observations to six primary schools in the southwest region and facilitated discussions to adapt ICPS intermediate and primary curriculum to better meet the needs of schools and their students.

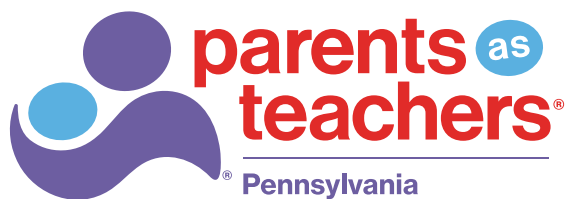
**#PassionForExcellence**

## CSC Vision Statement

Leading the way in lifelong learning through research based educational solutions that strengthen family-school-community partnerships.

## CSC Mission Statement

To strengthen systems that foster positive outcomes for children, youth and their families.



[Visit Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers website](#)

## Helping Parents as Teachers programs reach Blue Ribbon status

Parents as Teachers (PAT) programs provide parents with knowledge and resources to prepare their children for a strong start in life. The Pennsylvania Parents as Teachers State Office provided support to 56 affiliate programs and welcomed a 57th affiliate in June 2024.

Forty Pennsylvania based affiliate programs have attained Blue Ribbon status, a designation of fidelity to the model that is achieved by meeting rigorous standards throughout a five-year period.

**#PassionForExcellence**



[Learn more at PA Strengthening Families website](#)

## Expanding access to Strengthening Families Protective Factors

Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors framework is an approach to working with families that builds upon family strengths rather than focusing on deficits.

In 2023-2024, CSC introduced and trained more than 200 professionals and families on the protective factors through three Parent Cafe Training Institutes, courses, and Strengthening Families Conference: Partnering to Build Resilient Families and Communities.

**#ServiceToOthers**



[Watch Discussion on National Adoption Month](#)

## Helping prospective parents find their foster or adoptive child

In 2023-2024, there were more than 15,000 inquiries from individuals interested in fostering or adopting children in Pennsylvania. The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) Helpline, managed by CSC, provides comprehensive information and technical assistance on the state adoption and foster care processes, assists with matching prospective adoptive families and children, connects families with post-adoption services, and makes referrals to local adoption agencies, in partnership with Diakon, Voce Together and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

**#ServiceToOthers**

## CSC at a Glance

- **25+** projects and initiatives
- **35,992** professionals served (duplicate count)\*
- **38** states served
- **18** countries served
- **100%** of Pennsylvania school districts and counties served
- **83** events
- **85%** agree our conference quality is excellent or very good.
- **95%** strongly agree or agree that conference sessions are relevant to their work.

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CSC delivers a wide range of customized products and services to schools, community-based organizations, state government departments, and institutions of higher education. These products and services are designed to meet client needs and strengthen systems that support positive outcomes for children, youth, families and communities.



[Learn more about CSS Subscription Service](#)



[Learn more about CSC services](#)

## Creating a culture of preparedness among schools

When a school crisis hits, schools need immediate access to school safety supports from a high-quality, trusted resource. As the school year progresses, they also need flexibility to address changing needs.

To help schools address these challenges, Center for Safe Schools launched a subscription service providing priority access to professional development, review of preparedness materials, crisis support, implementation support, grant writing support, and product review support.

**#InnovationForGrowth**

## Designing data collection and analysis solutions

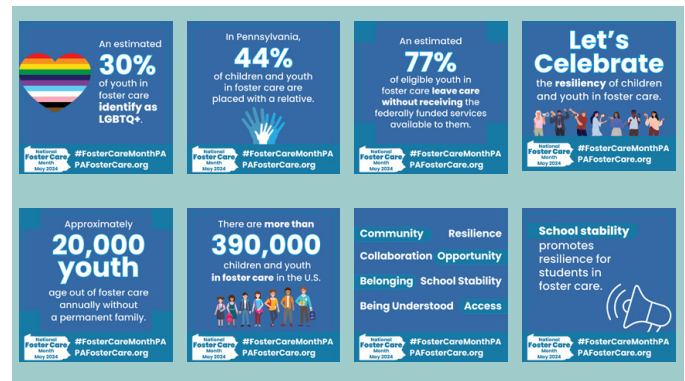
CSC provided robust data collection and analysis solutions to monitor and evaluate thousands of children and educators throughout Pennsylvania. In its work with Shippensburg University, CSC designed an extensive web-accessible database to monitor early childhood educators' professional development and factors related to their progress on Pennsylvania's Career Pathway.

Additionally, CSC designed and operates a statewide case management system for children receiving targeted mental health services via the Pennsylvania Key. The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program uses CSC's expertise in evaluation and statistical reporting to examine important changes in the program's input and outcome measures.

**#InnovationForGrowth**



[Learn more about The Bridge Project in PA](#)



[Learn more about Foster Care Awareness Month](#)

## Making free mental health services accessible to students experiencing homelessness

Children and youth experiencing homelessness often do not receive the mental health services they need, either due to a lack of or difficulty in accessing services, fear of stigmatization, or even embarrassment.

The PA ECEYH (Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness) program launched The Bridge Project in Pennsylvania, which facilitates no cost online mental health services for children and youth experiencing homelessness. Services can be accessed during the school day in partnership with the child's school. The project is funded by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**#ServiceToOthers**

## Building awareness of critical issues affecting students, families, schools and communities

To effect change, you first need to build awareness. In 2023-2024, CSC reached more than 4,000 professionals through public awareness campaigns including Foster Care Awareness Month, Bullying Prevention Month, World Refugee Day, and Afterschool Advocacy Day.

Campaigns included digital toolkits, informational materials and video content to raise awareness and engage others to support children and families.

**#ServiceToOthers**

## Partners and Funders

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Afterschool Alliance                  | Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC)                    | Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) |
| Be Strong Families                    | Millersville University                                  | Pennsylvania Office of Children Youth and Families                  |
| Berks County Intermediate Unit        | Myrna B. Shure   | Pennsylvania Office of Homeland Security                            |
| Capital Area Intermediate Unit        | National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) | Pennsylvania State Resource Association                             |
| Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit | National Youth Leadership Council                        | Pennsylvania Statewide STEM Ecosystem                               |
| Charles Stewart Mott Foundation       | Parents as Teachers National Office                      | Pritzker Traubert Foundation  |
| Children's Trust Fund Alliance        | Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange                           | Shippensburg University   |
| Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation | Pennsylvania Coalition to Advance Respect                | STEM Next Opportunity Fund  |
| Diakon Family Life Services           | Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD)  | Tuscarora Intermediate Unit   |
| Dorset Council                        | Pennsylvania Department of Education                     | U.S. Department of Education  |
| Fundacion San Carlos de Maipo         | Pennsylvania Department of Human Services                | VOCE  |

CSC serves as an intermediary organization, convening, facilitating and coordinating subject-driven meetings, educational advocacy events and professional learning conferences, and symposiums and forums. These opportunities strive to raise awareness, increase knowledge, build skills and facilitate change.



[Watch 2024 Advocacy Day video](#)

## Strengthening networks to mobilize, support and advocate for quality out-of-school time (OST) programming

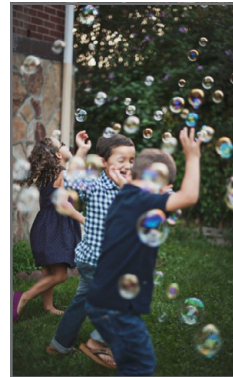
PSAYDN strengthens networks to mobilize, support and advocate for high-quality out-of-school time (OST) programs. Through partnerships with educators, youth organizations and policymakers, PSAYDN has expanded learning opportunities and built meaningful connections.

Its STEM outreach and policy work impacted over 3,200 individuals, reinforcing a commitment to educational equity. Through member outreach to elected officials and 2024 Advocacy Day, PSAYDN contributed to a key victory – the passage of the \$11.5 million BOOST program. PSAYDN will guide grantees in delivering high-quality programming and securing sustainable funding for the future.

**#EquityInAction**



[Visit Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund website](#)



### Our Vision

Every child, in every Pennsylvania community has access to proactive, aligned, sustainable, and effective social, emotional, and mental well-being resources to ensure career readiness and healthy contribution to their families and communities.

[Learn more on CPSEL's website](#)

## Reinvigorating statewide network to promote wellness and career readiness in students

Center for the Promotion of Social and Emotional Learning (CPSEL) paired with SEL4PA to re-envision SEL4PA's vision and activities. After conversations with professionals across Pennsylvania, SEL4PA launched its new vision at the 2024 National Social and Emotional Learning Conference – “Every child, in every Pennsylvania community has access to proactive, aligned, sustainable, and effective social, emotional, and mental well-being resources to ensure career readiness and healthy contribution to their families and communities.”

**#InnovationForGrowth**

## Leveraging resources and networks to prevent child abuse before it begins

CSC supports Pennsylvania Children's Trust Fund (CTF) grantees as they work in their local communities to prevent child abuse before it occurs the first time. CSC provides professional learning, monitoring and technical assistance to CTF grantees. CSC also provides resources to integrate the Strengthening Families™ Protective Factors into organizations and communities. In 2023-2024, CSC increased the number of opportunities for CTF grantees and board members to network, share experiences and build partnerships. Grantees and board members shared that they found these opportunities powerful and meaningful. CTF is administered by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

**#ServiceToOthers**