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Contact: Lauren Butler
(615) 853-0999
lbutler@cistn.org

A Statement from CIS-TN CEO Samantha Wigand

As we wind down the current school year, I realize I could never have imagined back in August what the world would look like today. Our students and families have experienced tornadoes, a global pandemic that has taken loved ones and isolated us all, job losses, hunger, and the toxic, chronic stress and anguish that accompanied these events.

Of all that, what shakes me, angers me, and scares me the most is the chronic and senseless inhumanity against people of color. The violent deaths of innocent people like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Eric Garner, Treyvon Martin, Tamir Rice, Stephon Clark, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Dominique Clayton, Bettie Jones, Atatiana Jefferson, Botham Jean, Walter Scott and countless others is not okay, and we cannot become numb to it.

Systematic racism and its detrimental outcomes for people of color is an incredibly personal issue to us at Communities In Schools. Our organization exists to ensure that all students have what they need to be successful in school and in life, despite immediate and systemic barriers. We tell our students that if they work hard and graduate, a world of possibilities awaits them. We cannot allow racism and police brutality to be among those possibilities.

Please stand with us against racism and injustice. Stand with us in clearing the path for thousands of children with immense potential for a bright future. Stand with us in making our world a place where children and families thrive. Stand with us in a commitment to create a compassionate community that protects and nurtures all its residents.

To our black, brown and indigenous students, parents, and co-workers: we see you, we hear you, and we stand with you now, as we pledge to take action to correct deep and pervasive racial disparities within the communities we serve.

Together we will create a tomorrow built on social justice, equity and unity for our students whose lives truly depend on it.

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About Communities In Schools of Tennessee

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Tennessee is part of the national CIS network known as the nation’s largest organization dedicated to empowering at-risk students to stay in school and on a path to a brighter future. Working directly inside 41 schools in 16 counties, we connect over 18,000 students across the state to caring adults and community resources designed to help them succeed. We do whatever it takes to ensure that all kids—regardless of the challenges they may face—have what they need to realize their potential.