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*Work Hard.*



*We'll Help.*

# Community Report 2015



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## Board President's Message

2015 was a great year for I Know I Can. We embarked on a journey of ambitious goal setting that led us to the largest expansion of college advising services in our 27-year history. In partnership with Columbus City Schools (CCS), I Know I Can is now providing full-time college and career advising in each of the district's 20 high schools. By hiring 15 additional college advisors, I Know I Can has increased its one-on-one advising with students as well as the breadth and depth of its services. Day in and day out, I Know I Can is working hard to meet the evolving needs of CCS students and families.

With our eye on local, state and national trends, in 2015, I Know I Can participated in and served as host to a number of events tied to First Lady Michelle Obama's Reach Higher initiative. This initiative is the First Lady's effort to inspire every student in America to take charge of his or her future by completing an education beyond high school. We are delighted to share more details of these initiatives with you in the forthcoming pages of this community report.

Beginning in December 2014, I Know I Can and CCS were invited to the White House College Opportunity Day of Action Summit. As one of 140 organizations selected across the nation to participate in this event, I Know I Can made a new commitment to do its part to improve college degree completion rates through the expansion of its high school advising model. After returning from the Day of Action Summit, I Know I Can immediately began planning local college access efforts that paralleled national college access and success efforts. I Know I Can worked collaboratively with CCS and the City of Columbus to sponsor its first annual College Signing Day on May 14, 2015, where seniors from each CCS high school participated in a ceremony announcing their college choices.

In July, I Know I Can staff and students returned to D.C., invited this time to the 2015 Beating the Odds Summit, a signature program of the Reach Higher initiative. Finally, after ensuring the 2015 graduates were successfully off to their college campuses, I Know I Can turned its attention toward the Class of 2016, again collaborating with CCS, City of Columbus and a number of community stakeholders to hold the first ever "All Seniors In" rally to encourage all high school seniors to take the necessary steps to graduate from high school and to be prepared for college, a career or the military. These events offered I Know I Can a window into the larger world of college access while affirming the value of our services in the Columbus community.

I Know I Can could not do all this amazing work without the support of our volunteers and donors. Thank you for your ongoing contributions of time and resources.

IKIC advisors  
in all  
**20**  
CCS  
high schools.

## Executive Director's Message

**How to change to remain the same.** There is no doubt that I Know I Can is amid the most significant organizational change in its history. As we move forward with our college advising expansion, we hold strong to our charge:

*to stay true to our core values while  
understanding and adapting  
to the changing landscape of higher education  
and the evolving needs of our students  
and families.*

We closed last year in celebration of reaching several milestones. First, IKIC increased its presence in the national college access and success community. Through participation in the National College Access Network's (NCAN) Benchmarking Project, as well as being a leading member of NCAN's Common Measures Learning Community (CMLC), we learned from and shared with other college access and success organizations, addressing the vital topics of data tracking and program best practices. Additionally, IKIC was able to benchmark Columbus students' college access, persistence and success rates against those of peer organizations across the United States. After many months of gathering and studying the data, IKIC was thrilled with the release of NCAN's "Closing the Graduation Gap: National College Access and Success Benchmarking Report," which conveyed that our students are achieving success in all college readiness and success metrics.

Our students  
are achieving success  
in **all** college  
readiness and  
success metrics.

But even with this great news, we know there is more work to be done and progress to be made. Our presence in these national efforts is leading to greater organizational learning, both in terms of what we do really well, and how we address the changing higher education trends. We enter this new year with a commitment to reach our bold goals and to enhance organizational effectiveness to support Columbus City Schools, its students and families and our entire community for years to come.

On behalf of I Know I Can, thank you for your part in reaching this success in 2015. We look forward to sharing more milestones and progress toward our bold goals in 2016!

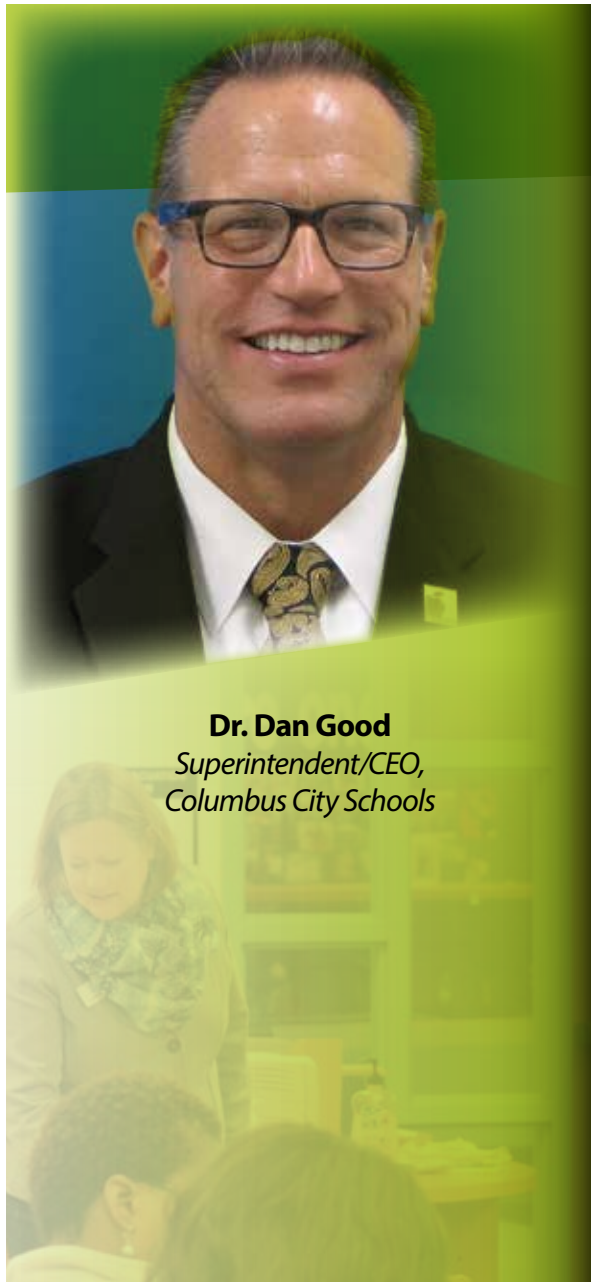


**Katina Fullen**  
Executive Director, I Know I Can

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**Dr. Dan Good**  
Superintendent/CEO,  
Columbus City Schools

## Superintendent's Message

A **Spirit of Success** echoes across Columbus City Schools — down every hallway, in every classroom, around our buses and buildings and throughout our entire community — with a new sense of purpose and pride, matched with a renewed devotion to innovation and a steadfast commitment to academic achievement. I Know I Can (IKIC) is an impactful and inspiring component of this Spirit, giving our students a greater opportunity to reach the goal of graduation and advance their education in college and beyond.

IKIC's mentors and advisors provide valuable one-on-one counseling for college and career readiness, helping students meet and complete critical milestones in the college application process. Past data shows that when students engage with IKIC in three or more one-on-one advising sessions, they have a dramatically better chance of college enrollment. That's why we expanded our partnership with IKIC to have one full-time advisor in each of our 20 high schools.

To help families afford the costs of college, IKIC annually awards more than \$1.5 million, on average, to our graduates. Adding to that, IKIC advisors help students identify additional sources of financial aid and scholarships. Our graduating class of 2015 earned more than \$42 million in scholarships.

IKIC was an instrumental partner in organizing the inaugural "All Seniors In" rally, bringing together more than 2,400 seniors from all of the district's high schools. This energetic mix of community leaders, local dignitaries and several successful CCS graduates served as the kickoff to our year-round Reach Higher efforts to motivate and support high school seniors in crossing the finish line at graduation. IKIC partners on events throughout the school year to keep students motivated and to celebrate their steps toward graduation, including our annual College Signing Day when many of our academic scholars make the commitment to attend universities and colleges.

While much of our shared focus has been on the high school level, it's never too early to start thinking about and planning for college. IKIC's Blueprint:College workshops for our middle schools expanded access to college planning information, reaching students and their families even earlier. By starting in middle school, we can give our students greater access to the resources, support and guidance they need to develop their talents, keep focused on graduation and reach for a brighter future.

At Columbus City Schools, we want all of our students to be inspired, knowing that there is an entire community full of supporters who are ready to give them the opportunities to learn, grow and launch a lifetime of success. For nearly three decades, I Know I Can has been a tremendous source of this information and inspiration... and it continues to fuel our Spirit of Success.

**The Spirit of Success is the Spirit of CCS.**

**3:**  
The number of recommended advising sessions with IKIC to increase postsecondary enrollment.

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Together, we can **reduce the costs** of education for students, families and taxpayers.

Columbus State and the Central Ohio Compact. **Together We Can.**

A Regional Strategy for College Completion and Career Success



Over the past 12 months, I Know I Can (IKIC) has experienced an incredible journey by way of connecting with and learning from national efforts to improve college access and success, specifically the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative launched to inspire every student in America to take charge of his or her future through a professional training program, a community college or a four-year university. It was a great year to engage in programs to promote our understanding of the national landscape for college access and success, while simultaneously bringing lessons learned back to the local community and to the Columbus City Schools (CCS) students and families we serve.

## CCS Students #ReachHigher

### College Opportunity Day of Action Summit

IKIC's Executive Director, Katina Fullen, was one of 140 college presidents, nonprofit, corporate and foundation leaders invited to Washington, D.C., where President Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama and Vice President Joe Biden hosted the 2nd Annual College Opportunity Day of Action Summit. The event centered on building networks of colleges

focused on promoting completion, creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness and investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative. Here, Fullen, alongside CCS Superintendent and CEO, Dr. Dan Good, made a bold pledge for action, which has guided IKIC's work over the past 11 months.



Washington, D.C. – Katina Fullen and Dr. Dan Good at the White House College Opportunity Day of Action Summit.

### College Signing Day

With enthusiasm and dedication, IKIC worked collaboratively with the City of Columbus and Columbus City Schools to hold the first annual College Signing Day on May 14, 2015. The College Signing Day event celebrated CCS seniors graduating from high school and making the commitment to enroll in college. Representatives from each of CCS's 20 high schools announced their college selection and signed a pledge to successfully earn a degree. The event was premised on the idea that every student — not just athletes — should have the opportunity to be publicly celebrated for going to college. In the years to come, IKIC envisions an event that will both inspire younger students to set college aspirations as well

as foster participation and ongoing commitment from its higher education partners.

### Beating the Odds Summit

IKIC's Senior Director of College Advising, Kim Ebbrecht, accompanied Claudia Owusu, a graduate of Mifflin High School and now a freshman at Otterbein University, along with Tiwuan Atchley, a graduate of Linden-McKinley STEM Academy and now a freshman at Wittenberg University, to First Lady Michelle Obama's Beating the Odds Summit in July 2015. Here, as part of her Reach Higher initiative, the First Lady welcomed a group of 130 college-bound students to talk about and share experiences of overcoming obstacles to persist through high school and make it to college.

The event included a panel moderated by E! News host Terrence Jenkins, featuring First Lady Michelle Obama, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, musical artist Wale and Manuel Contreras, a rising senior at Brown University and co-founder of IvyG, an organization that supports first-generation college students.



Washington, D.C. – Claudia Owusu's picture at the Beating the Odds Summit is reposted by First Lady Michelle Obama.



Columbus, Ohio – College Signing Day participants show off their commitment letters at City Hall.



Columbus, Ohio – (from left to right) Ohio Wesleyan mascot greets CCS students as they enter Huntington Park for the "All Seniors In" rally; IKIC Board President Tanny Crane shares an encouraging story about college access; CCS seniors sign banners as a pledge to take the necessary steps to graduate from high school.

Speakers focused on tools and strategies that students could use to successfully transition to college, as well as highlighted the resources they would need to persist and complete the next level of their education.

Students also participated in workshops and panels led by the U.S. Department of Education, Google's Jaime Casap and other leaders in K-12 and postsecondary education. The day was meaningful, and certainly one that Claudia and Tiwuan will hold onto throughout their college journey.

### All Seniors In

Turning our attention toward the Class of 2016, on September 17, 2015, IKIC again collaborated with the City of Columbus and Columbus City Schools to launch the first annual "All Seniors In" rally at Huntington Park. The event, which included all 2,400 district seniors, served as a kickoff to their final year of high school as well as a reminder of the steps they need to take to graduate from high school and be prepared for college, a career or the military. During their senior year,

students must complete a number of tangible milestones to prepare for life after high school, and this rally was designed to motivate students to have a plan. District and community members were in attendance and committed to provide every student the support and tools needed to achieve their individual goals. As part of All Seniors In, both students and the community made a pledge to #ReachHigher. IKIC is looking forward to a number of events in early 2016 designed to celebrate their steps toward graduation and beyond!

To everyone who works for, volunteers with, and financially supports I Know I Can:  
Thank you.


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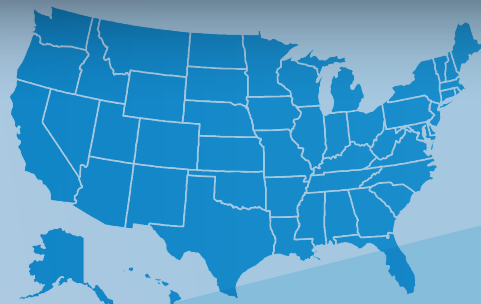


# IKIC Bold Goals for 2020

**62% by 2020.** That is I Know I Can's (IKIC) Bold Goal for college enrollment. And we are not alone. From the White House to higher education associations, and within many local communities, there is a much broader understanding of the importance of increasing college enrollment and completion rates. That is why IKIC and Columbus City Schools (CCS) developed a new 2020 vision: **Every** CCS student is **prepared for** and has **the choice** of enrolling in college or entering into a career after high school. With this vision come **BOLD GOALS** around improving postsecondary enrollment, first-year success and graduation rates of CCS students.

IKIC will achieve these stated goals (3) through a new advising model, placing one advisor in each CCS high school to collaborate with principals, counselors and teachers to foster a college-going culture among students. Along the way, IKIC will track and achieve nationally recognized college access benchmarks, including participation in advising sessions, participation in college entrance exams, submission of college applications and submission of necessary documentation to receive federal and local financial assistance for college, to ensure we are providing a high return on investment to all of our stakeholders.

Reestablish the highest portion of **college graduates** in the world.



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**2**  
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**4**  
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**5**  
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Participate in a **one-on-one session** with an IKIC advisor.

Take a **college entrance exam**.

Complete and submit two or more **college applications**.

Complete and submit the **FAFSA** on time.

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## IKIC and CCS Partnership

Increasing the number of CCS students who **enroll, persist and complete** postsecondary education.



### College Enrollment:

Increase number of students enrolling from  
**42% to 62%**

### College Persistence:

Increase number of students persisting from  
**67% to 72%**

### College Completion:

Increase number of students graduating from  
**34% to 40%**

Increase the number of advisors.  
**20 IKIC College Advisors**





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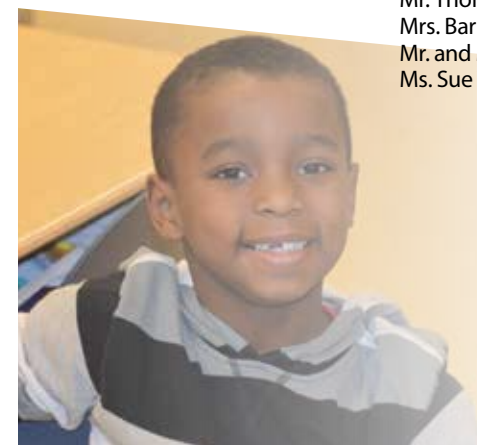
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Listed donations are from fiscal year 2015.



# Denison Columbus Scholars

In October, Denison University announced a new initiative in partnership with Columbus City Schools (CCS) and I Know I Can (IKIC). The program, Denison Columbus Scholars, aims to make college more accessible to students in the district by providing free tuition for 20 CCS graduates annually, beginning with the class of 2017.

more feasible and affordable one for CCS students.

With the support of IKIC's College Advisors in each high school, this initiative will provide sound college preparation, guidance and support for CCS students. Each cohort of students will apply and be selected as scholars during their junior year of high school. Once selected, they will participate in a college preparation program consisting of pre-collegiate workshops that focus on oral communication and qualitative reasoning skills. Additionally, the workshops will help students identify keys for academic success to prepare for and encourage high school graduation. After the students arrive on Denison's campus, similar resources and guidance will continue throughout their four years to ensure persistence and completion.

IKIC is honored to be a partner in this initiative. Together, IKIC, CCS and Denison will work hard to make certain more CCS students enroll, persist and complete college.

This year, Save Smart participants saved \$45,000 and leveraged a total of **\$200,000** for college!

Just a short drive from the heart of Columbus, Denison University is a top-tier liberal arts institution that continues to be an attractive college choice for many central Ohio students. Through Denison Columbus Scholars, the university will not only remain a desirable option, but also be a

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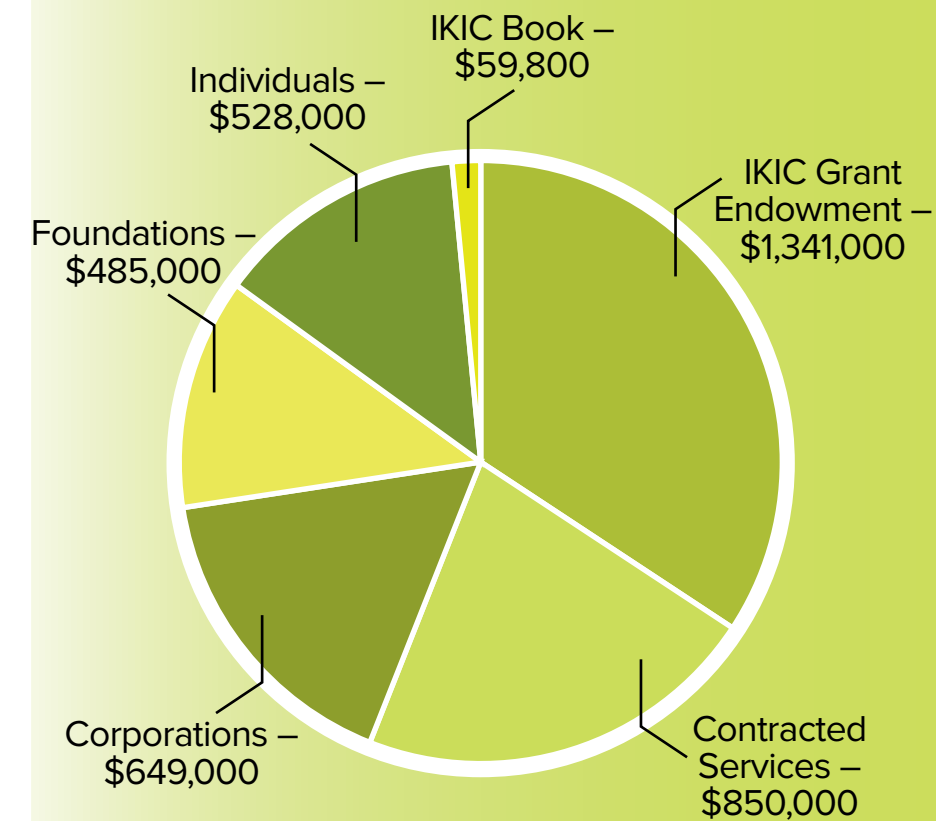
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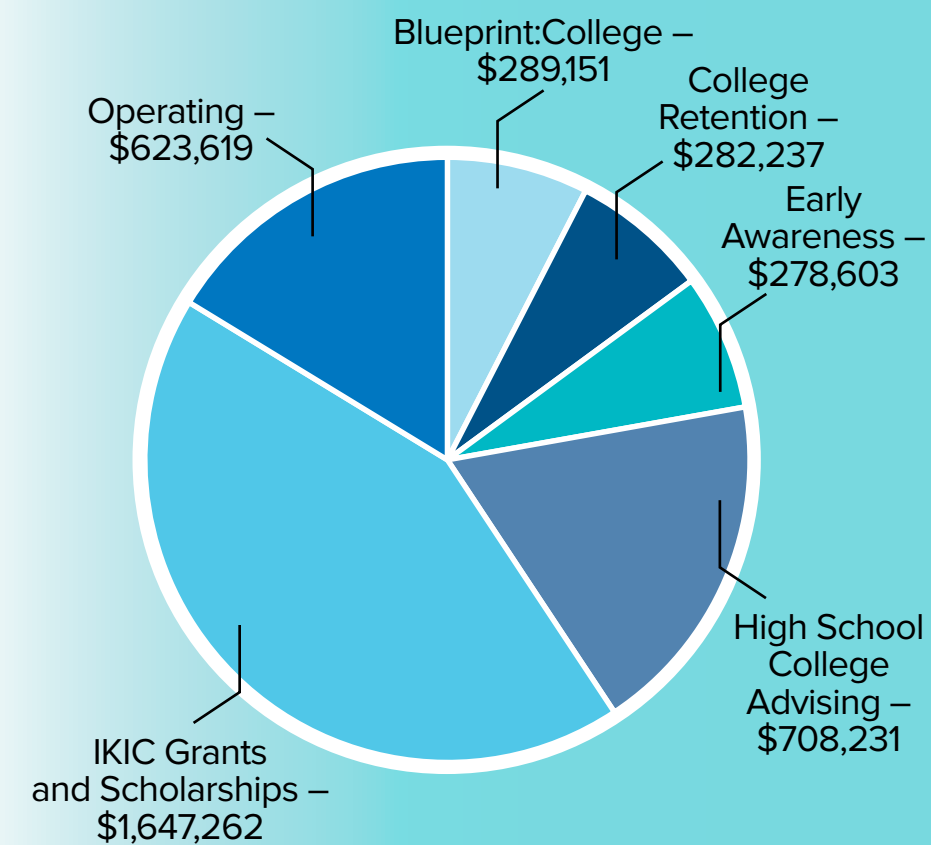


## Fiscal Year 2015 at a glance

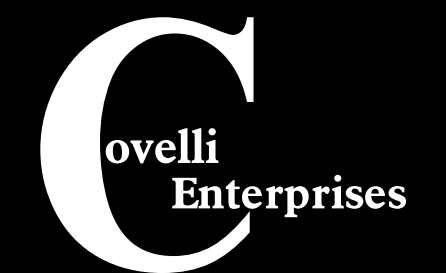
### Total Revenue—\$3,912,800



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\*Budgeted expenses



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# IKIC Program Overview

## Blueprint:College

An after-school series of college and career planning workshops offered to all Columbus City Schools (CCS) families grades 6–11. Blueprint:College provides key college readiness and financial education to place students and parents on a college trajectory. Hosted in CCS buildings throughout Columbus, in addition to The Ohio State University and Columbus State Community College, Blueprint:College is an innovative approach to parent engagement and college planning.

## College Advising

Full-time staff with backgrounds in college admissions, financial aid and counseling provide one-on-one college coaching for CCS students as well as classroom presentations and workshops. Advisors work in every CCS high school and play a key role in coordinating wrap-around services in the college preparation and selection process. These services include assistance with college applications, college entrance exams, campus tours, financial aid, scholarships and grants.

## College Retention

College retention efforts are available to any CCS graduate who enrolls in postsecondary education. IKIC College Guides deliver services that ensure students have knowledgeable support during the critical transition from high school to college and throughout their postsecondary journey. IKIC provides programming on 17 college campuses throughout the state to assist students in the creation and refinement of academic and career goals, enhancement of connectedness to their chosen postsecondary program and the removal of financial barriers to persistence via financial literacy and support.

## Early Awareness

I Know I Can's early awareness services focus on enhancing college aspirations, information on college requirements and knowledge of postsecondary costs. Advisors utilize a college and career readiness platform, Naviance, which creates unique profiles for each CCS student, grades 6–10. The platform helps advisors ensure that each child has met specific milestones to assist with college preparation and persistence. In addition to Naviance, I Know I Can supports early awareness initiatives through a program titled Real Money. Real Money is an

active, hands-on experience that gives more than 3,000 8th grade students the opportunity to make lifestyle and budget choices to help them with future decision-making skills as it pertains to their postsecondary success.

**25,500:**

The number of hours IKIC AmeriCorps Ohio College Guides dedicated to helping CCS families prepare for college.

## FAFSA Workshops

Each year, IKIC College Advisors and volunteers assist more than 600 families in completing and submitting their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Completing this application is necessary for students to receive all available financial aid for college. Each year, IKIC provides support to every CCS high school during the first two weeks of February, maximizing the number of FAFSAs completed prior to the February 15 priority deadline set by many colleges and universities.

## College Funding

Federal Pell Grant-eligible CCS graduates with demonstrated unmet financial need receive the \$1,200 IKIC grant, which is renewable for four years. During the 2014–2015 academic year, IKIC awarded more than \$1M in grants to high school seniors and CCS graduates enrolled in postsecondary education.

Highly competitive students are given the opportunity to apply for the Founders' Scholarship, worth \$40,000 over four years. Currently 42 CCS graduates are Founders' Scholarship recipients.

**1:**

The number of donations it takes an individual to help us reach our goals.

Please give at [iknowican.org](http://iknowican.org).

## Right to Read Week

Right to Read Week is an annual, weeklong event focused on the importance of reading and postsecondary aspirations among CCS 2nd grade students. In 2015, more than 100 community volunteers read I Know I Can's self-titled book to 2nd grade classrooms in 50 CCS elementary schools. IKIC's Right to Read program teaches students the importance of dreaming big and working hard to ensure postsecondary success. To continue the conversation for postsecondary preparation, all CCS 2nd grade students receive a copy of *I Know I Can* to take home to their families.

## Save Smart

Save Smart is a federally supported Individual Development Account (IDA) program offered to students in grades 8–12 as well as CCS graduates enrolled in postsecondary education. Save Smart provides CCS students with a 4:1 match on their savings for college, making higher education more affordable for participants. CCS students and graduates who successfully complete the program earn an additional \$1,000 for college, which leveraged \$200,000 in financial support for CCS students in 2015.

# Thank You to Our Volunteers Who Helped Us Accomplish Our 2015 Goals!

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The investment in grants IKIC made to 848 students pursuing their postsecondary dreams in 2015.

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# College Mentorship Program

College can be exceptionally challenging. More so, for I Know I Can (IKIC) students it can be full of uncertainty regarding issues like mastering study skills, building a resume and navigating internship opportunities. To address these concerns, IKIC launched a mentorship program connecting Columbus City Schools graduates who are enrolled in college with Columbus area working professionals. Our mentorship program affords IKIC students the opportunity to make meaningful connections in an effort to alleviate some of the woes college can present during the first few years.

While the program focuses on matching first-year students, IKIC mentors are encouraged to maintain their relationships with their mentees over the long haul, helping them learn strategies to make the most of their college experience. Ultimately, this mentorship model has the potential to provide mentees with unique exposure to career fields while increasing college persistence and completion rates.

Created with the busy schedules of both students and mentors in mind, IKIC's mentorship program is organized via an online platform — a high-quality, state-of-the-art approach to mentorship. Once mentors complete a matching assessment and a background check, the platform allows for complete flexibility to communicate online. Better yet, it automatically provides both the mentor and mentee with two to three communication topics per month to ease both users' overall experience.

Lastly, the program provides participants the opportunity to meet face to face at signature events, including the mentorship program kickoff, holiday party and end-of-the-year celebration.

A comparable mentoring program based in Cleveland, Ohio, boasted a 96% first-to-second-year retention rate during its first two years, exceeding the national retention rate of 58% for low-income students. With the launch of this program in central Ohio, we anticipate similar results for our students. IKIC is proud to expand this opportunity locally because the potential impact is huge!

## We need your help.

IKIC has set bold goals for the program's expansion in 2016. Each I Know I Can grant or scholarship recipient (nearly 1,200 students) deserves the opportunity to be matched with a community mentor. Make a commitment to support our students by signing up today!

To join, contact Marion Meadows, IKIC Assistant Director of College Mentoring and Retention, at 614-233-9510 or [mmeadows@iknowican.org](mailto:mmeadows@iknowican.org).

# A Special Thank You to our 2015 Founders' Scholarship donors and partners

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We are proud to support I Know I Can with their mission to help Columbus City Schools students dream big and work hard.

  
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Cameron Johnson  
Independence High School  
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Mifflin High School  
Attending:  
Yale University



Claudia Owusu  
Mifflin High School  
Attending:  
Otterbein University

**Don and Teckie Shackelford wish you the best of luck  
and know you are bound for success!**

# Two Leaders, One Goal

Working together to help students reach their true potential



Columbus, Ohio – Gabby Hill and Sara Penny show their school spirit at Centennial High School.

For Centennial High School counselor Sara Penny and IKIC advisor Gabby Hill, each day starts with one goal in mind — to help students succeed. Sara has worked as a teacher and now a counselor for nearly 18 years in Columbus City Schools. Gabby recently completed her master's in school counseling and has worked as an IKIC College Advisor and College Guide for the past three years. Together, they provide access to the knowledge, information and resources Centennial students need to enter and succeed in college.

college and career readiness platform, while Sara is taking another group on a college visit or helping to write recommendation letters. Sara has been a great resource and I value her expertise and insight."

Gabby and Sara understand the triumphs and challenges these students face because they have helped many through such experiences. Together, they are a stronger team, able to offer robust attention to detail and a higher level of support to Columbus students. Their teamwork is just one example of what is taking place in every high school across the district. These valuable partnerships help more students get to and through college.

**4,500:**  
the number of CCS  
2nd graders who received  
the IKIC book to promote  
reading and college  
aspirations!

When IKIC expanded its college advising program this academic year, Sara was quick to welcome Gabby to the high school on a full-time basis and was thrilled to have a partner in guiding students toward graduation and beyond. "Because Gabby is here more often, students really have an opportunity to get to know her," said Sara. "Together we can tag-team everything students need to successfully complete the college admission process. We work very well together, because in the end, it's about getting it done for the students."

With the added days in the school, Gabby agreed, stating, "Being in the school daily has allowed me to spend more quality time with students. As an advisor, I can help guide a group of students through Naviance, a

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- Senior (\$1,000–\$2,499)
- Junior (\$250–\$999)
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