CELC and CMS Partnership Overview

About CELC

The Charlotte Executive Leadership Council (CELC) brings together CEOs and senior leaders from the region's largest companies, colleges and universities, along with well-respected small business leaders.

Members work together to support solutions that improve Charlotte's economic vitality, equitable opportunity and quality of life for all.

About the CMS Partnership

- In 2022, CELC, the CMS Foundation, and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools formed a public-private partnership to bring the talent and resources of Charlotte's corporate and higher education communities to support the school district.

- The CMS Foundation manages the partnership, which was initially launched to support CMS during the challenges that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. After experiencing positive impacts, the partnership continued at the district's request.

- Each year, CMS executive staff members review their annual plans and identify where outside support would be most useful. The CMS Foundation then works with CELC to find resources that meet those needs.

- Since its inception, the CELC-CMS partnership has brought executive expertise, strategic guidance and private-sector resources to district priorities identified by CMS leadership. Support has included project consulting, leadership advisories, resource sharing, leadership development, educator recognition and student celebrations and the Executive in Residence Program.

- More than 20 executives have participated as Executive in Residence. Participants are selected and compensated by their employers and are interviewed and onboarded by CMS staff to ensure alignment.

- Executives in Residence have supported a number of initiatives focused on school safety, process management, communications, school partnerships, tutoring, student and teacher recognition and Meaningful Medicine, on-campus virtual health clinics, among other areas of impact.

Examples of Key Partnership Successes

- **Mobilized executive talent at scale.** More than 20 Executives in Residence have supported CMS since 2022, providing expertise in strategy, finance, communications, partnerships, talent and organizational effectiveness.
- **Expanded student access to health care.** Supported expansion of the Meaningful Medicine initiative, which aims to improve access to health care and address health disparities. School-Based Virtual Care increased from 10 pilot schools in 2022 to 128 sites in 2025-26, with 4,442 SBVC visits during the program year. Seventy-five percent of students were able to return to class following their visit.
- **Improved Pre-K access and placement.** A redesigned matching process and new Power BI dashboard helped CMS fill 95% of available Pre-K slots ahead of its target date, while processing approximately 6,000 applications during the initial year of support in 2023-24.
- **Strengthened district strategy and operations.** Executives in Residence helped CMS leaders develop the CMS Strategic Plan 2024-2029, supported annual planning and progress monitoring across more than 80 divisions and departments, and introduced financial management improvements that shortened the monthly books close by 10 days.
- **Helped secure full county funding.** Executives supported CMS in framing its 2023-24 budget priorities and financial needs, contributing to Mecklenburg County fully funding the district's request for the first time in recent history. The district's budget request has been fully funded by the County each year since.
- **Built stronger infrastructure for community partnerships.** The Partnerships Hub, developed in 2024, brought together information on 184 schools, 466 partners and 460 programs, giving CMS a clearer picture of existing resources, unmet needs and partnership activity. Additional support helped implement a CRM to more effectively match community partners to identified needs and measure impact.