



Check & Connect

A comprehensive student engagement intervention

Check & Connect and the Florida State Personnel Development Grant Overview

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to DiscoverSM



The Check & Connect Model of Student Engagement



Check & Connect

Check & Connect is a structured mentoring intervention to promote student success and engagement at school and with learning through relationship building and systematic use of data.



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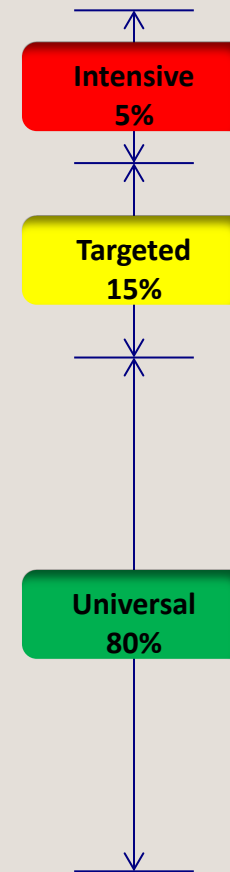
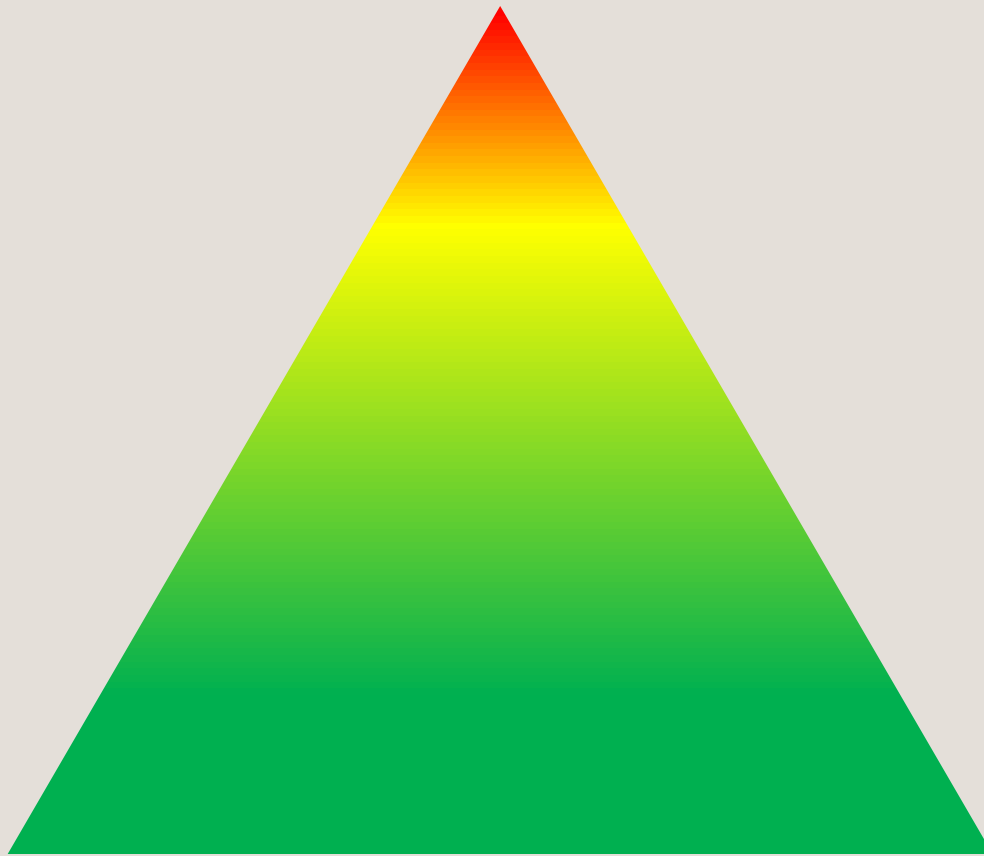


Check & Connect Assumptions

- C&C is based on the following assumptions:
 - Leaving school prior to graduation is not an instantaneous event
 - Solving the dropout problem requires partnership
 - Students must be empowered to take control of their own behavior



Fit With Existing Initiatives





Components of Check & Connect

1. **A mentor** who works with students and families for a minimum of two years
2. **Regular checks** utilizing data schools already collect on students' school adjustment, behavior, and educational progress (**Check**)
3. **Timely interventions**, driven by data, to re-establish and maintain students' connection to school and learning and to enhance students' social and academic competencies (**Connect**)
4. **Engagement with families** – mentors engage with parents and strive to foster parents' active participation in their child's education



Core Elements of Check & Connect

- **Relationships**
 - Focus on alterable variables
 - Personalized, data-based intervention
 - Long-term commitment
 - Participation in and affiliation with school
- **Problem solving and capacity building**
- **Persistence-plus**



Core Elements of Check & Connect Relationships

Relationships are:

- Based in mutual trust and open communication,
- Nurtured through a long-term commitment, and
- Focused on promoting a student's educational success





Core Elements of Check & Connect: Relationships Focus on Alterable Variables

Focus on Alterable Variables

The systematic monitoring (“check”) of indicators of disengagement that are readily available to school personnel and can be altered through intervention.

What are some examples of alterable variables?



Core Elements of Check & Connect: Relationships Personalized, Data-Based Intervention

Personalized, Data-Based Intervention

Supportive interventions (“connect”) that are personalized, not prescriptive; mentors use data as the basis for intervention design.

- It is expected that different students on a mentor’s caseload will receive different interventions.



Core Elements of Check & Connect: Relationships Long-Term Commitment

Long-Term Commitment

Mentors make at least a two-year commitment to a student.

- May involve following highly mobile youth and families from school to school and program to program within the district.



Core Elements of Check & Connect Persistence-Plus



Persistence-Plus

Mentors:

- are a *persistent* source of academic motivation,
- are familiar with the youth and family (*continuity*), and
- provide the message that “education is important for your future” (*consistency*).



Research Designs and Evidence

- Check & Connect has met the evidence standards of the What Works Clearinghouse:
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
 - The only intervention showing positive effects for staying in school



Check & Connect Steps for Implementation



11 Implementation Steps

1. Determine indicators of student disengagement
2. Identify students at risk of disengagement or dropout
3. Select or hire mentors
4. Organize existing resources for intervention
5. Get to know students, teachers, and parents
6. Use “check” procedures and the monitoring form
7. Implement “connect” interventions
8. Strengthen the family-school relationship
9. Monitor the person-environment fit
10. Provide mentor support and supervision
11. Evaluate program implementation

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Identify Target Population

- Determine who the students in your school at-risk of disengaging are
- Establish criteria for participation in C&C
 - Emphasize academic and behavioral indicators of engagement – data are readily available
 - **Behavioral:** absences, office referrals, suspension, limited extracurricular participation
 - **Academic:** low rates of work completion, reading below grade level, failing classes, below proficiency on state tests, credit deficiency, low time on task



Who Can Serve as a Check & Connect Mentor?

- **Dedicated Mentors:** Individuals hired part-time or full-time to serve as C&C mentors
- **Existing School Staff:** Teachers, social workers, psychologists, counselors, paraprofessionals, and other school personnel
- **Volunteers:** Community volunteers such as undergraduate or graduate students, volunteers from civic organizations or businesses
- **AmeriCorps Volunteers:** Full-time volunteers hired through AmeriCorps
- **Master level students, retired teachers**

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Check: Monitoring Sheet

- Mentors use a monitoring form to check student educational progress (attendance, grades, credits, etc.)

Check & Connect high school monitoring form



Student _____ ID _____ Grade _____
 School _____ Mentor _____ Month _____

CHECK																				
Academic data	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F
Number of Ds or Fs																				
Number of missing assignments																				
Cumulative grades	1st quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					2nd quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					3rd quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					4th quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs				
Credit accrual	___ Credits earned out of ___ total possible															___ GPA				
Met state academic standards	Math: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					Reading: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					Writing: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No									
Behavior data	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F
Tardy																				
Skipping classes																				
Unexcused/unverified absence																				
Excused absence																				
Behavior referral/infraction																				
Detention																				
Suspension (in school/out-of-school)																				



Mentors Engage with Families

- Mentors strengthen the family-school relationship through:
 - Acting as liaisons
 - Following students and families
 - Connecting with families through the student
 - Keeping the focus of family-school connections on the student's educational performance
 - Enhancing communication with families
 - Creating opportunities for dialogue



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Additional Implementation Steps

- Organize existing resources for intervention
- Coordinators provide support to mentors
- Monitor the person-environment fit
 - Consider how the environment could be changed to better support the student
- Evaluate program implementation
 - How do you know Check & Connect is working in your school?



**LaBelle High School
Check & Connect Program**



Student Selection

- 26 students “officially” as of today in the program
 - 9th Grade – 5
 - 10th Grade – 6
 - 11th Grade – 6
 - 12th Grade - 9
- Criteria for selection
 - GPA
 - Attendance
 - Discipline
 - # of credits

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Mentors

- 25 official mentors and 10 unofficial mentors
- Mentor selection process
- Approximately 1- 2 students from the grant per mentor
- Availability of small stipend provided with grant money

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Initial Connections and Building Relationships with Families

- Parent contact
 - Email
 - Phone
 - In person contact
 - Letters



Utilization of Existing Resources

- SEDNET
- TIPS
- United Way – United Way office houses 77 organizations
- Health Department
- Tutoring programs
- Credit recovery programs

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“Check” Procedures

- Before/After school meetings
- Some students are enrolled in a class with his/her Mentor
- Having lunch with his/her Mentor
- Email
- Hall Stops

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“Connect” Interventions

- Open access to several areas of student records
- Support of Guidance department and Discipline office to get mentors information needed for tracking
- Mentor plays a role in scheduling of classes
- Attendance Rewards
- Credit Recovery Milestones
- Connect students with behavioral services needed. i.e. mental health counseling

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How Are We Doing So Far?

- Students involved in Check and Connect:
 - have recovered a total of 20 credits since the program started in August 2013
 - have increased their attendance by 50% since last year at this time
 - have decreased discipline referrals by 25%
- In addition, students who are at-risk of meeting the Check & Connect criteria are identified and provided supports
- Mentors have alleviated some of the Guidance Dept. workload by providing academic & career counseling

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Sustainability Plan

- How do we maintain this program?
 - Grants
 - Positive Impact (no money needed)
 - Utilization of existing resources

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Resources



SPDG Check & Connect Staff in Florida

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Check & Connect Resources

- Website: <http://checkandconnect.umn.edu>
- National discussion listserv – sign up from the website
- Phone (toll-free): 1-866-434-0010
- Email: checkandconnect@umn.edu
- Follow us (see links from website):
 - Sign up for email announcements
 - Read and follow our new Wordpress blog
 - Social media

facebook



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Questions regarding LaBelle High School Check & Connect?

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