# Check & Connect Project: Key Information

The **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)** is provided by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to help state educational agencies reform and improve their systems for personnel preparation and professional development for individuals providing early intervention, educational, and transition services to improve results for children with disabilities.

Check & Connect (C&C) was developed by the University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, and is a comprehensive student engagement and dropout prevention program for students at risk of dropping out of school. Check & Connect has four critical components:
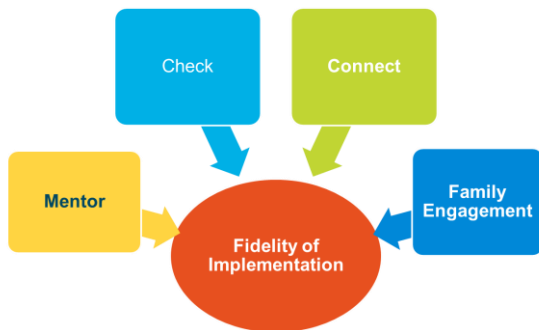
- **Mentor:** who works with students and families for a minimum of two years
- **Check**: systematic monitoring of data schools already collect on students' behavior, attendance and course performance
- **Connect:** timely interventions driven by data, to reestablish and maintain students' connection to school and learning and to enhance students' social and academic competencies
- **Family Engagement:** mentors engage with parents and other caretakers to foster their active participation in their child's education

Studies show that Check & Connect improves enrollment, attendance and the likelihood of graduation for students who are disengaged and at risk of dropping out of school. Check & Connect has also demonstrated effectiveness in supporting students with emotional/behavioral disabilities to improve school attendance and increase student participation in their transition individual educational plan (IEP) meetings (Sinclair et al., 1998; Sinclair & Kaibel, 2002; Sinclair et al., 2005). For more information on Check & Connect visit: http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/

SPDG Funded Resources:

SPDG funds will support: professional development, systems and individual coaching, intervention materials and resources, technical assistance, implementation support and access electronic tools.

Grant Structure:

- **The District Implementation Team (DIT)** determines the vision, purpose for implementation of SIM and actionable goals based on district data. This cross-functional team also sets the budget, establishes supporting processes (e.g. reimbursement and in-service points) and monitors implementation and progress toward goals.
- **The School Implementation Team (SIT)** determines the purpose for implementation of C&C at the school and sets goals based on school data. This team supports the mentors by assuring access to resources needed and problem-solving school-based barriers to implementation.
- **The C&C Coordinator** is the staff member at each school who serves as the liaison between the DIT, SIT,

mentors and SPDG C&C staff. Coordinators facilitate the SIT and meet with C&C project staff and mentors monthly to share and gather information. ***Estimated commitment: 8 hours per month***

- **Mentors** are paired with a student and build a long term relationship with them and their families. Mentors regularly monitor and document student risk factors, provide encouragement and feedback, as well as more intensive interventions if indicated. ***Estimated commitment: 4 hours per month for each student mentored.***

Schedule of Trainings:

Required Order	What?	Why?	Who?	How long?
1	Preparation and Implementation	Orient school team to C&C, Plan implementation for their school	School Implementation Team	6 hours
2	Mentor Training	Prepare individuals to become effective mentors	New Mentors, Future Coordinators	12 hours
3	Coordinator Training	Prepare Individuals to become effective Coordinators	New Coordinators	4 hours
4 (annually, after one year of implementation)	Fidelity of Implementation Workshop	Reflect on implementation, action plan for program improvement	School Implementation Team, Coordinators, DCC	3 hours

*Additional (optional) professional development opportunities will be offered such as Train-the-Trainer, Trainer Refresher, Coordinator and Mentor Summits

Required C&C Documentation:

What	Why	Who Collects	When Due	Method
Mentee Intake / Exit Form	Obtain student characteristics and outcomes	Coordinators	When a student is assigned a mentee and when he/she exits	SPDG portal
Coaching Feedback and Conditions Survey	Evaluate effectiveness of SPDG staff and identify needed supports	DIT members, SIT members, Coordinators, Mentors	November, April	Online survey link
Fidelity Scoring Summary	Determines fidelity of implementation as well as mentee level progress	Coordinators (for each mentor/mentee pair)	December, March, June	SPDG Portal
Student Engagement Inventory	To obtain student perception of their own school/learning engagement	Mentees (Facilitated by Mentors or Coordinators)	Intake and annually in February *Sept 2020 all students take SEI (due to COVID-19)*	Online survey link
Mentor Practice Profile	To assess fidelity of implementation and identify supports needed	Coordinators	March 15 – June 15	SPDG Portal

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