



Check & Connect

A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention

Eileen Klemm, M.A. and Angie Pohl, Ph.D.

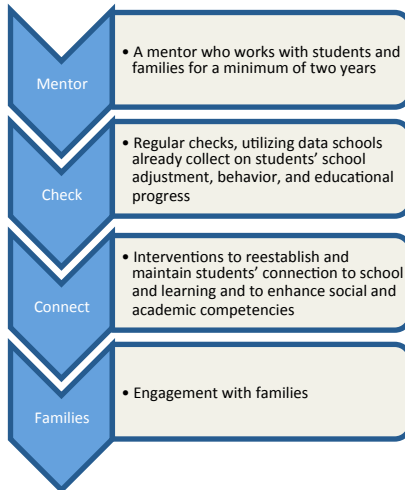
Institute on Community Integration
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

What is Check & Connect?

A Comprehensive Intervention

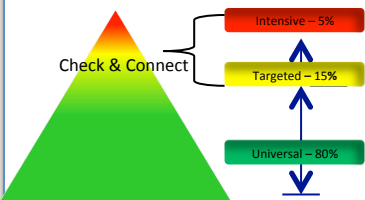
Check & Connect is a structured mentoring program designed to enhance student engagement at school and with learning for marginalized, disengaged students in grades K-12, through relationship building, problem solving and capacity building, and persistence.

Check & Connect consists of four components:



Used with Universal Interventions

Check & Connect is designed to complement universal, tier 1 strategies. Whether Check & Connect is a 2nd or 3rd tier intervention depends on a school's needs, capacity to serve students, and intensity of intervention with students.



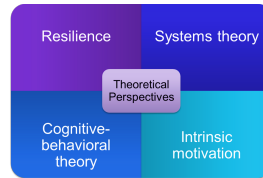
Development Highlights

1990-1995

Research began in 1990 with five years of funding support from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education. The principal investigators on this grant were Drs. Bruininks, Thurlow, and Christenson.

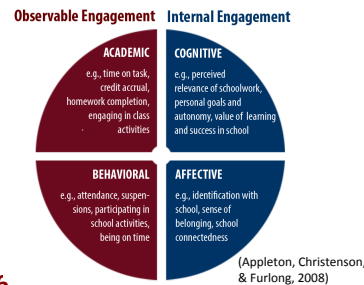
Development of Check & Connect was a collaborative effort between researchers at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration (ICI) and professionals in Minneapolis Public Schools.

During development, the Check & Connect model was informed by the theories illustrated in the figure below.



2003-2005

A major focus on our theory of student engagement in Check & Connect occurred with the development and validation of the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI). We define student engagement as students' active participation in academic and co-curricular activities and commitment to learning. As represented below, it is conceptualized as multi-dimensional.



2006

Check & Connect met the evidence standards of the What Works Clearinghouse of the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education (WWC, 2006).

Research

Selected Findings

Selected findings from our various research studies of Check & Connect include:

- As a **sustained intervention**, Check & Connect improves **enrollment, attendance, and odds of graduation for students who are disengaged and at risk of dropout** (Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998).
- Check & Connect improves **persistence, enrollment, access to relevant educational services, student involvement in IEP transition planning, and attendance for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities** (Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005).
- The **mentor-student relationship as provided in Check & Connect improves engagement for elementary students** (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004).
- Check & Connect improves engagement—specifically, **attendance—for elementary students** (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004).
- Check & Connect works to **actively engage students and families at school and with learning** (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004).
- Check & Connect improves outcomes for students with a **history of truancy** (Sinclair & Kaibel, 2002).

Impact

Check & Connect has led to:

- Increased credit accrual
- Increased persistence rates
- Increased graduation rates
- Perceived increase in parent participation
- Reduced absences
- Reduced tardiness to school/class
- Decreased dropout rates
- Reduced behavior referrals

Current Projects

Efficacy Studies

Efficacy trials are underway in four large urban school districts to further examine the question, for whom does Check & Connect work and under what conditions? These studies are examining the impact of Check & Connect on elementary and secondary students with and without disabilities.

American Institutes for Research: Assessing the Efficacy of Check & Connect for Improving Outcomes for At-risk High School Students

- Years: 2011-2014
- Funder: Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE)
- Location: San Diego Unified School District, CA

Stanford Research Institute: Efficacy Study of Check & Connect to Improve Student Outcomes

- Years: 2011-2015
- Funder: IES, U.S. DOE
- Location: San Jose Unified School District, CA

Québec Adaptation and Validation of the Check & Connect Dropout Prevention Program

- Years: 2010-2013
- Funders: Saint-Hyacinth School Board; Des Grandes-Seigneuries School Board; Fonds de Recherche Société et Culture
- Location: Montréal, Québec, Canada

Preventing Truancy in Urban Schools: The Chicago Public Schools and the National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago

- Years: 2011-2015
- Funders: IES, U.S. DOE; National Institutes of Health
- Location: Chicago Public Schools, IL

Adaptations of Check & Connect

After-School Settings

- BE GREAT: Graduate
- Making a Map: Finding My Way Back

Native American Youth

- Connecting Through Service: A Model for Integration of Check & Connect and Service Learning

Postsecondary Students

- Check & Connect: A Model for Engaging and Retaining Students with Intellectual Disabilities in Higher Education
- Making the Connection: Engaging and Retaining Students in Postsecondary Education