



## ***Using Check and Connect to Promote Student Participation in the IEP Meeting***

### **What is the evidence base?**

A *potential* level of evidence based on one acceptable quality group study

### **With who was it implemented?**

- Students with
  - Emotional/ behavior disorders (n = 71)
- Ages ranged from 14 – 26; ninth graders, followed for three to five years
- Males (n = 60), Females (n = 11)
- Ethnicity
  - African American (n = 45)
  - European American (n = 17)
  - Other (n = 8)

### **What is the practice?**

*Check and Connect* is a structured intervention model designed to assist schools and organizations in identifying students who are at risk for dropping out of school, then pairing those students with mentors who address each student's individual needs to help them progress toward school completion

(<http://checkandconnect.org/model/default.html>; Christenson et al., 2008).

#### The Four Components of Check & Connect

1. A mentor who keeps education salient for students
2. Systematic monitoring (the "check" component)
3. Timely and individualized intervention (the "connect" component)
4. Enhancing home-school communication and home support for learning

#### The Core Elements of Check & Connect

- Relationship Building—mutual trust and open communication, nurtured through long-term commitment focused on students' educational success.

- Routine Monitoring of Alterable Predictors—systematic check of warning signs of withdrawal (attendance, grades, suspensions) using data readily available to school personnel.
- Individualized and Timely Interventions—support tailored to individual student needs, based on level of engagement with school, associated influences of home and school, and the leveraging of local resources.
- Long-term Commitment—committing to students and families for at least 2 years, including the ability to follow mobile youth from school to school.
- Persistence Plus—persistent source of academic motivation, continuity of familiarity with youth and family, and consistency in the message that “education is important for your future.”
- Affiliation with School and Learning— facilitate students' access to and active participation in school-related activities and events.
- Problem-solving and Capacity Building—promote the acquisition of skills to resolve conflicts constructively and to look for solutions—avoid the tendency to place blame and diminish potential to create dependency.

### **How has the practice been implemented?**

In the article used to establish the evidence base for *Check and Connect* to promote student participation in the IEP meeting

- Caseloads of 30 – 35 students were assigned to monitors
- Monitors responsibilities included
  - providing monitoring of variables (e.g., attendance, academic performance), including monthly summaries and reviews of data
  - holding weekly conversations with students in the program regarding the relevance of education
  - providing problem-solving training (e.g., real and hypothetical scenarios)
  - providing transportation for families for school meetings
  - following-up with students through mobility (school transfers)
  - inviting and encouraging student participation in IEP meetings
  - assisting students with signing up for extracurricular activities (e.g., waiving enrollment fees, accompanying or transporting to the first meeting)
- Students with disabilities who participated in the intervention were more likely to (a) participate in their IEP meetings, (b) articulate goals or services related to transition

### **Where has it been implemented?**

- General school locations
- Community
- Home
- Hospital

### **Where is the best place to find out how to do this practice?**

- The website for *Check & Connect* provides numerous resources for implementing the model including information on a manual (Christensen et al., 2008) and trainings <http://checkandconnect.org/default.html>

### **How does this practice relate to Indicator 13?**

- Indicator 13 Checklist Item # 3: Implementing a dropout prevention intervention for a student may reflect data gathered during the transition assessment process
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item # 4: Many of the components of *Check & Connect* may be transition services designated in an IEP that will enable a student to meet his or her postsecondary goal(s)
- Indicator 13 Checklist Item #7: Some of the components of *Check & Connect* would include inviting students to participate in all of their educational planning meetings, including their IEP meeting

### **How does this practice relate to Common Core Standards?**

- Comprehension and Collaboration (Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening, Grades 9-12)
  - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
- Making Inferences and Justifying Conclusions (Statistics and Probability, High School)
  - Evaluate reports based on data.

### **How does this practice relate to the State's Career Cluster Initiative: Essential Knowledge and Skills?**

- Demonstrate use of the concepts, strategies, and systems for obtaining and conveying ideas and information to enhance communication in the workplace (Communications)
  - Communicate with other employees to clarify workplace objectives.
- Employ critical thinking and interpersonal skills to resolve conflicts with staff and/or customers (Problem Solving)
  - Implement stress management techniques.

### **References used to establish this evidence base:**

Sinclair, M. F., Christensen, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2005). Promoting school completion of urban secondary youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 465–482.

**Additional references:**

Christenson, S. L., Thurlow, M. L., Sinclair, M. F., Lehr, C. A., Kaibel, C. M., Reschly, A. L., Mavis, A., et al. (2008). *Check & Connect: A comprehensive student engagement intervention manual*. Minneapolis, MN: Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. Retrieved from <http://www.checkandconnect.org/publications/default.html#manual>.



# Check & Connect

A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Web site of Check & Connect—a model to promote students' engagement with school, reduce dropout, and increase school completion. The Check & Connect model originated from a partnership of researchers, practitioners, parents, and students led by the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

**Save the Date!** The next [training](#) in Minneapolis will occur **June 16-17, 2011.**

This Web site offers information regarding the Check & Connect model, current projects and initiatives, related publications, upcoming presentations and workshops, and staff. We hope this information is useful to educators, researchers, administrators, and others interested in helping youth remain engaged in school and on track to graduate.

Check & Connect is one of 28 [dropout prevention interventions](#) reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's [What Works Clearinghouse](#) to date, and the only one found to have positive effects for staying in school.

Order a copy of the [Check & Connect Manual \(2008\)](#).

## What is Check & Connect?

Check & Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement with school and learning. Demonstrated outcomes include:

- decrease in truancy,
- decrease in dropout rates,
- increase in accrual of credits,
- increase in school completion, and
- impact on literacy.

Check & Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal – primarily attendance indices (absences, tardies, or skipping class)—in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems.

Check & Connect is implemented by a person referred to as a monitor or mentor. The person is a cross between a mentor, an advocate, and a service coordinator whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students and their teachers and family members. The monitor/mentor works with a caseload of students and families over time (at least two years) and follows their caseload from program to program and school to school.

Check & Connect is structured to maximize personal contact and opportunities to build trusting relationships. Student levels of engagement (such as attendance, grades, suspensions) are "checked" regularly and used to guide the monitors' efforts to increase and maintain students' "connection" with school.

Institute on Community  
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This Web site is approved by [Bobby v5.0](#) as being inclusive to users by following the [WAI Guidelines for Accessibility](#). Suggestions, questions, or comments may be directed to [checkandconnect@umn.edu](mailto:checkandconnect@umn.edu).



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