



# Check & Connect

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A comprehensive student engagement intervention

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# Check & Connect

A comprehensive student engagement intervention

Web Cast:

## The New Check & Connect Manual

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# Why Be Concerned About School Completion?

- About 70% of all students in the nation graduate from high school with a regular diploma:
- Of the students who graduate:
  - 80% are Asian
  - 76% are White
  - 58% are Hispanic
  - 53% are African American

*(Alliance for Excellent Education, June 2007)*

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# Why Do Students Say They Drop Out?

- Problems getting along with teachers
- Getting suspended or expelled
- Unfair discipline policies
- Bad grades
- Not liking school
- Peers dropping out
- Inability to get into desired programs
- Need to support family by working or providing day care to younger siblings

*(Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morison, 2006)*

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# Purpose of Today's Web Cast...

To introduce participants to Check & Connect and the new implementation manual which was published last week.

The idea behind the manual is for school districts, community organizations, and others to be able to replicate Check & Connect in their home communities.

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# What is Check & Connect?

Check & Connect is a comprehensive, targeted intervention designed to enhance students' engagement at school and with learning.

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# An Important Premise of Check & Connect is...

The shift in focus from preventing **negative** outcomes (dropout) to promoting **positive** outcomes (student competence, school success, and school completion).

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# How Did Check & Connect Begin?

- 1990: Five year development grant from the U.S. Department of Education, OSEP
- Purpose: Develop, implement, evaluate, and refine an intervention for reducing dropout rates among middle school youth with disabilities
- Partnership for School Success
  - Planned with Minneapolis School District Personnel
  - Implemented with 2 cohorts of students over 2 years

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# Project Assumptions

- Leaving school prior to graduation is not an instantaneous event
- Solving the dropout problem will require a multifaceted effort of home, school, community, and youth
- Students must be empowered to take control of their own behavior
- Schools must be designed to reach out to families in partnership with community

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# Research Designs and Evidence

- Treatment-control differences for secondary students with disabilities in longitudinal designs:
  - Improved attendance
  - Improved social skills ratings and homework completion
  - Enrolled in School and progress toward degree (credits earned)
  - Higher graduation rates for five years

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# Research Designs and Evidence

- Four replication studies for elementary and secondary students with and without disabilities
  - Student and mentor perceptions of the relationship predicted teacher-rated academic-engagement
  - High degree of teacher satisfaction with mentor and student performance

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# Research Designs and Evidence

- Check & Connect has met the evidence-based standards of the What Works Clearinghouse for staying and progressing in school.
- <http://www.whatworksclearinghouse.org>

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# How is the Manual Organized?

1. Introduction to Check & Connect
2. Implementation Steps for Check & Connect
3. Key Personnel for Implementation of Check & Connect
4. Unique Features of Check & Connect



# How is the Manual Organized?

5. Implementation Lessons and Considerations
6. Evidence of Check & Connect Impact
7. Modifying Check & Connect for Different Contexts
8. Future Directions



# Check & Connect Consists of Four Components

1. A mentor who keeps education salient for students



# Check & Connect Consists of Four Components

2. Systematic Monitoring (the “check” component)
  - Number of absences
  - Number of tardies
  - Number of suspensions
  - Number of expulsions
  - Number of behavioral referrals
  - Number of failing classes
  - Number of credits accrued

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# Check & Connect Consists of Four Components

3. Timely and individualized intervention (the “connect” component)
  - Tutoring
  - After school activities
  - Homework help



# Check & Connect Consists of Four Components

4. Enhancing home-school communication and home support for learning

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# Manual Includes Sample Forms

- Monitoring Sheets
- Baseline Forms
- Referral Forms

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# Monitoring Sheet - Check

## Check

	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	High risk for month
Tardy												
Skip												
Absent												
Behavior Referral												
Suspension (In/Out of School)/Detention												
Failing classes	D's _____ F's _____ Classes passed out of _____ total											
Behind in Credits	Credits earned out of _____ total											
Pass High School Exit Exam	Yes _____ No _____											

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# Monitoring Sheet - Connect

## Connect

### *Basic*

	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F
Shared "check" data										
Provided regular feedback										
Discussed staying in school										
Problem-solved about risk										

### *Intensive*

Personal & future goal setting										
Contracted for behavior or grades										
Communicate/problem solve with parents										
Made special accommodations										
Participated in community service										
Participated in school-sponsored activity										
Participated in social skills group										
Worked with tutor										
Arranged for alternative to suspension										
Small group instruction for passing exit exam										
_____ Other*:										

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# 7 Elements of Check & Connect

- 1. Relationships:** Mutual trust and open communication, nurtured through a long-term commitment that is focused on student's educational success.
- 2. Problem solving:** Cognitive-behavioral approach to promote the acquisition of skills to resolve conflict constructively, encourage the search for solutions rather than a source of blame, and foster productive coping skills.
- 3. Individualized, data-based intervention:** Support that is tailored to individual student needs, based on level of engagement with school, associated influences of home and school, and the leveraging of local resources.

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# 7 Elements of Check & Connect

4. **Affiliation with school and learning:** Student access to and active participation in school-related activities and event
5. **Persistence-Plus:** A persistent source of academic motivation, a continuity of familiarity with the youth and family, and a consistency in the message that “*education is important for your future*”.
6. **A focus on alterable indicators of disengagement:** Systematic check of warning signs of withdrawal (attendance, academic performance, behavior) that are readily available to school personnel and that can be altered through intervention.
7. **Following students and families:** Following highly mobile youth and families from school to school and program to program.

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# Examples of Check & Connect Applications

- Teachers as Mentors
- Americorps Volunteers as Mentors
- Support Personnel (Counselors, Social Workers) as Mentors
- Community Professionals (Police Officers) as Mentors

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# Check & Connect Information

For more information about Check & Connect, including training options, contact the Institute on Community Integration, 866-434-0010 or e-mail [checkandconnect@umn.edu](mailto:checkandconnect@umn.edu)

*To order a Check & Connect Manual go to:*

<http://ici.umn.edu/checkandconnect/>

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