

SSIP/TSI Collective Supports Leadership Launch

Check and Connect

May 5, 2021





Dekalb County Schools

Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Model

Darnell T. Logan, Ed.D.
Check & Connect Trainer

Check & Connect Overview



Check & Connect is a structured mentoring intervention to promote student engagement

- at school
 - with learning
- through***
- relationship building
 - systematic use of data.



This photograph and the remaining stock photos were used with permission from Microsoft.

How is Check & Connect different?



Check & Connect

- School engagement focus
- Research based
- Data driven
- Structured not prescriptive
- Included intensive intervention
- Targeted risk factors

Traditional Mentoring Programs

- Social/emotional focus
- Varies depending on school and training
- Potential positive outcomes, but not empirically proven

Focus on School Completion



Check & Connect emphasizes school completion rather than dropout prevention

- School completion = high school graduation with academic and social competence
- Merely keeping students in school until graduation is not sufficient

Core Beliefs



- Disengagement is a process that occurs over time
- Check & Connect mentors can “interrupt” that process and help to re-engage students

Findings



- ↑ 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

(Sinclair et al., 1998; 2005)

Recognition



- Check & Connect has met the evidence standards of the What Works Clearinghouse (2006 & 2015):
<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>
 - The only dropout prevention intervention to show positive effects for staying in school



Core Components



Mentor

- Relationship building
- Long-term commitment
- Persistence-Plus

Check

- Systematic monitoring
- Focus on alterable variables

Connect

- Problem solving
- Capacity building
- Personalized, data-based intervention
- Promoting participation/affiliation with school

Engagement with Families

- Connect, partner, and engage with parents/families

Desirable Mentor Characteristics

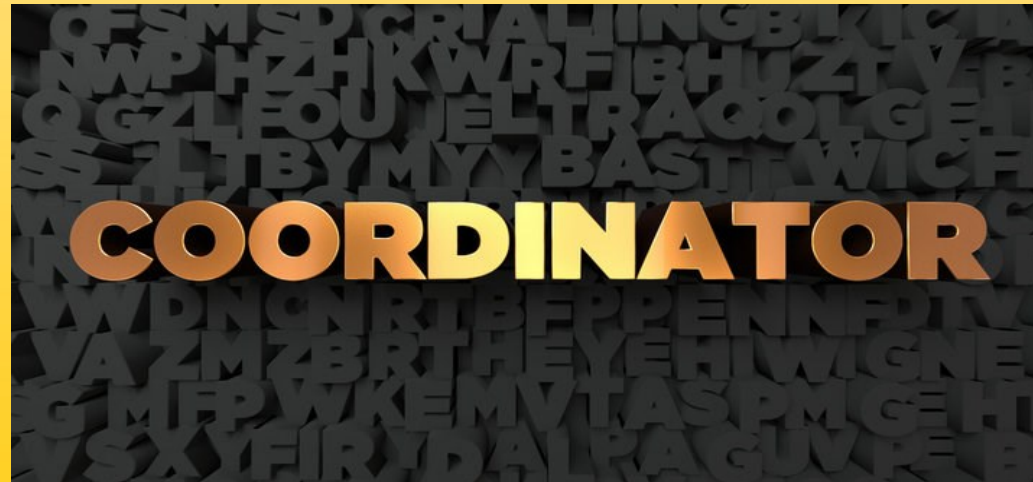


- A willingness to:
 - Be a mentor (i.e., “wanting to rather than being obligated to”)
 - Persist with students despite their behavior and decision making
 - Cooperate and collaborate with families and school staff



Role of the Coordinator

- Supervise and provide support to Mentors
- Monitor fidelity of implementation
- Work with administration to integrate Check & Connect into existing programs and practices



Implementation Models



- Dedicated Staff
- Existing Staff

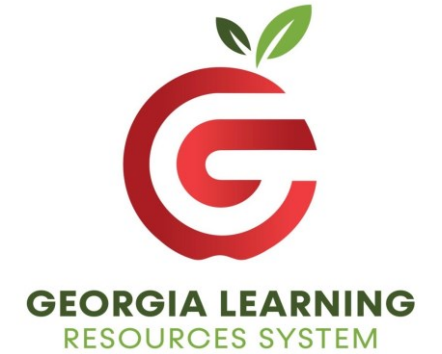


Funding Sources



- CEIS Funds
- Cross Departmental Funding
- Title IV
- COVID-19 Funding

For More Information



Contact your local Georgia Learning Resources System Director
[Georgia Learning Resources System of Georgia \(GLRS\)](#)

Or

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Check & Connect: A Large District's Implementation

Darnell T. Logan, Ed.D.

Assistant Director

DeKalb County School District

Taffy Fletcher, MSW

Lead Student Engagement Coach

DeKalb County School District



DeKalb County School District



140 SCHOOLS –
Hybrid Model



96,000
STUDENTS
Pre-Pandemic
(104,000)



15,500 EMPLOYEES
(6600 TEACHERS)



155 NATIONS/ 185
LANGUAGES

THIRD LARGEST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN GEORGIA

Objectives

- District Background
- District Challenges
- Why Check & Connect?
- Implementation: Data



Schools Supported

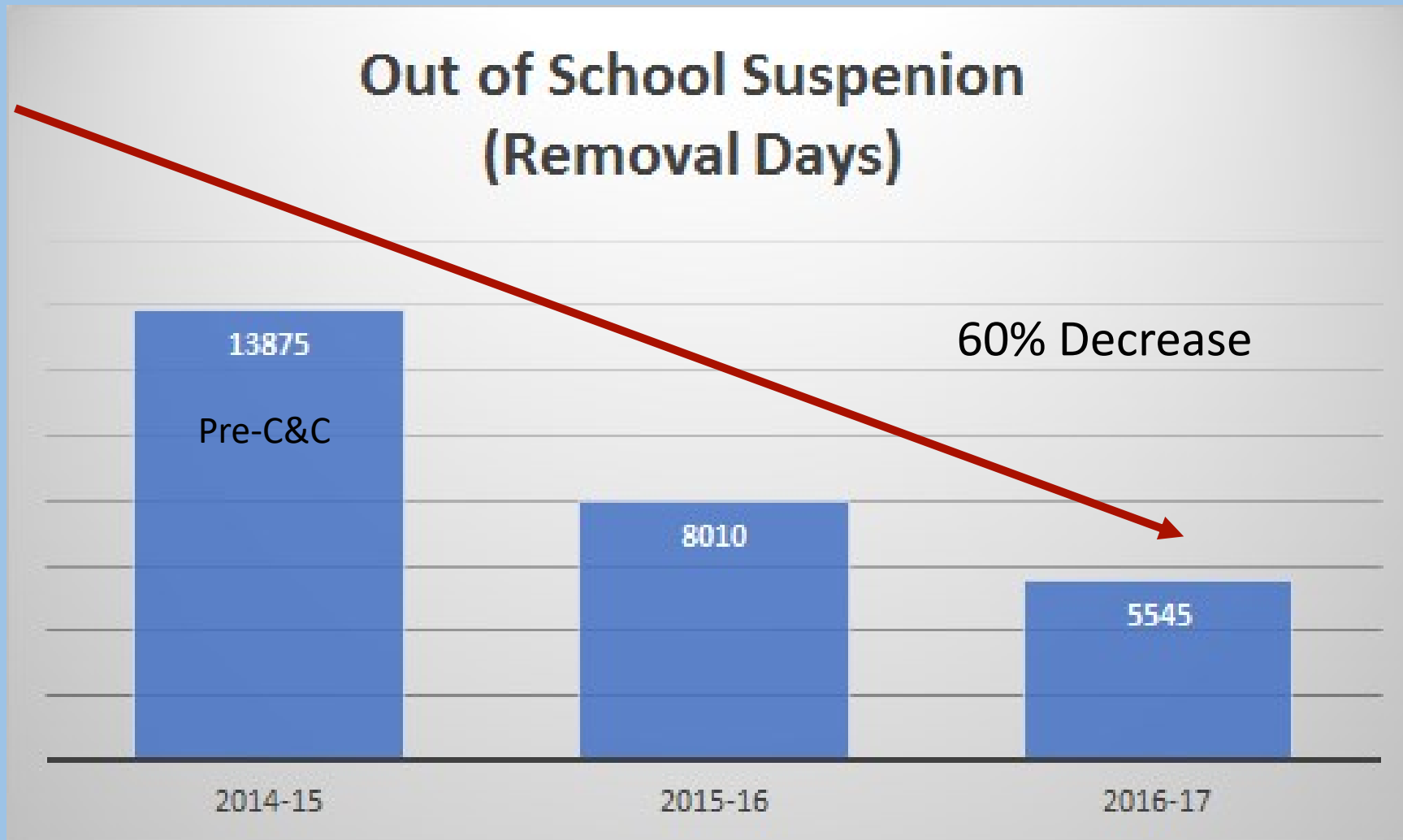
Initial Implementation (2 cohorts) Current Implementation

- Implemented in 35 schools from Fall 2015 – Spring 2018.
 - 1 Alternative School
 - 1 Elementary School
 - 16 Middle Schools
 - 17 High Schools
- 36 Full-Time Dedicated Mentors
- Over 2000 students received Check & Connect Support for during this implementation

- Implemented in 15 schools during the 2019-2021 academic year
 - 11 Elementary School
 - 2 Middle Schools
 - 2 High Schools
- 15 Full-Time Dedicated Mentors
- Over 580 students are currently receiving Check & Connect

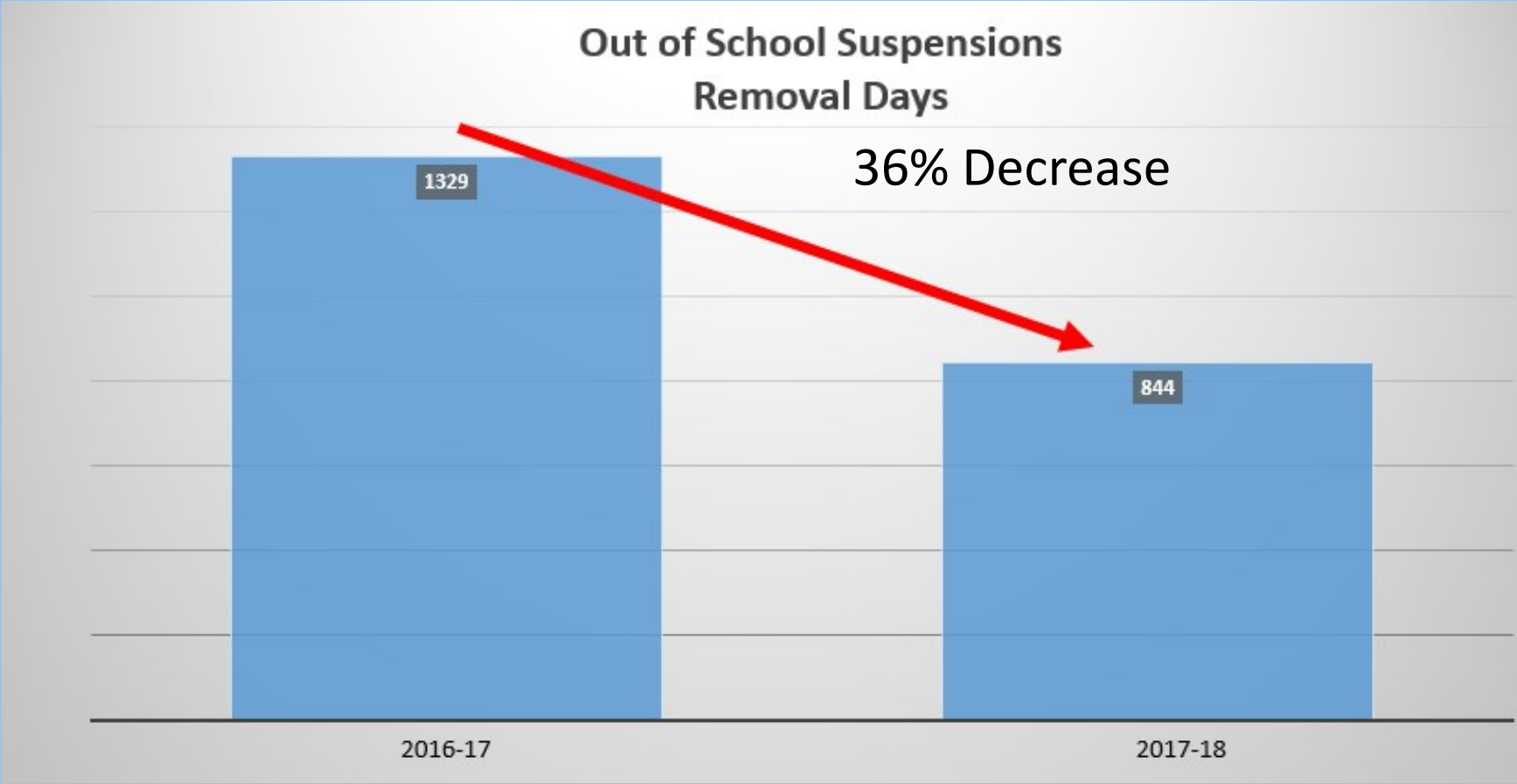


Initial Implementation First Cohort



Initial Implementation

Second Cohort





- **Return to School** – Our students are showing confidence in learning verses being in a remote learning setting.
- **Family Engagement** – Liaison for our students, families and schools by addressing: crisis issues, school communication barriers, enrollment, school attendance/performance).
- **Leadership Buy-in** - Check & Connect is supported and praised by our students, parents, teachers and administration.
- **Academic Achievement** – Strategies to improve student success (Routine Readiness, Make-up Mondays, Chat & Chews, Cool to Attend School and Star Scholar Packages).
- **Resources** – Community partnerships to provide needed resources (Atlanta Food Bank, Chick-fil-a, DeKalb Co. Juvenile Court, and One Powerhouse).
- **Granting Writing** - \$5,000 on the behalf of Check & Connect - Stone Mountain Elementary School.



Communication Barriers

- Mentees are limited in communicating openly in their homes
- Distractions in the home atmosphere
- Contact information being obsolete

ESOL Student

- Language barriers/ limited understanding
- Incompletion of course work/no support in the home or community
- Chronic attendance concerns

Goal Setting

- Reviewing, reflecting on the student's strengths
- Low motivation and struggling due to transient issues in schools

Technology

- Connectivity concerns
- Logging into the classes / Work submission
- Poor class participation.

Welcome Back to School “ Check & Connect”

Check & Connect

March 15, 2021 First Day Back in the Building

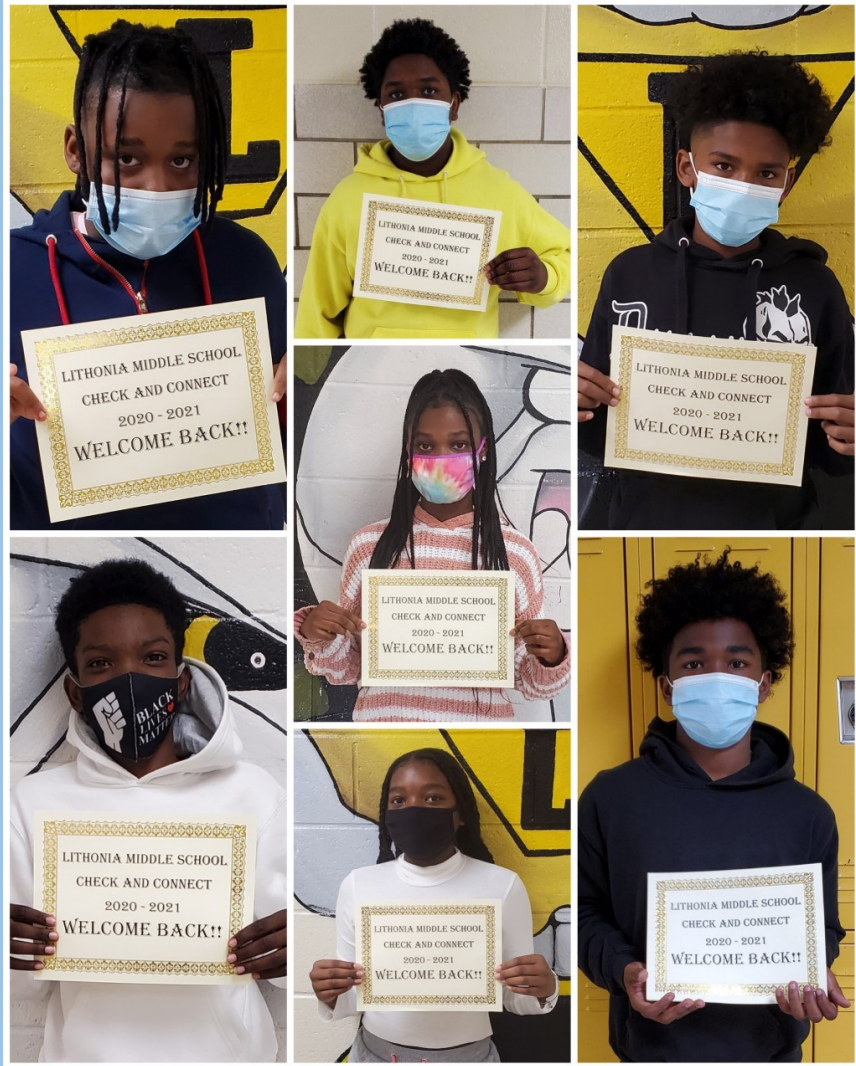
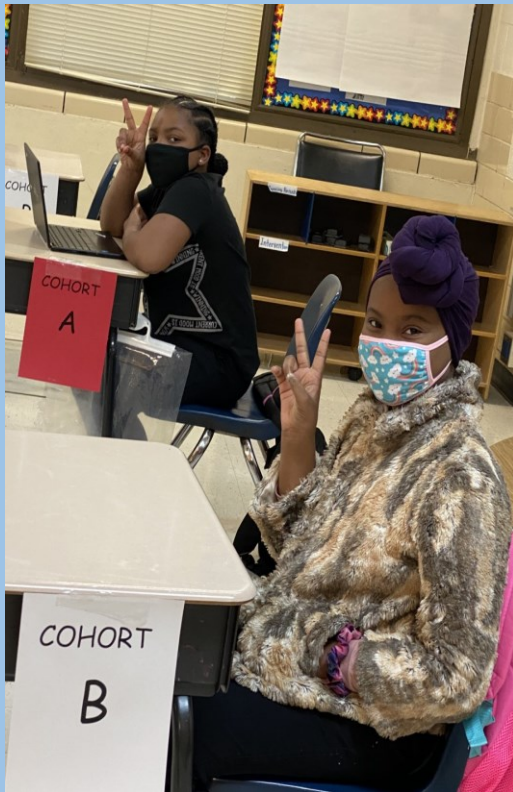


WELCOME BACK

Mrs. Sherri Crayton-Brown welcomed her **Murphey Candler Elementary School** 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students back to the building by greeting them with personalized gift bags filled with their favorite snacks!



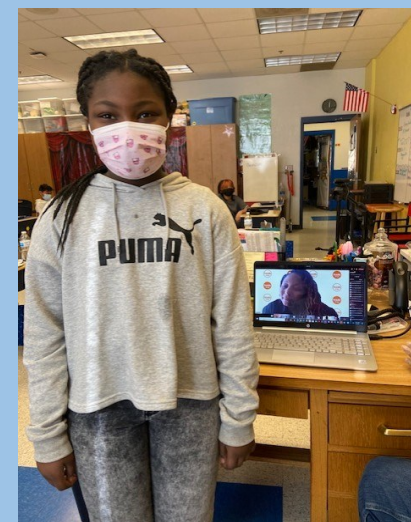
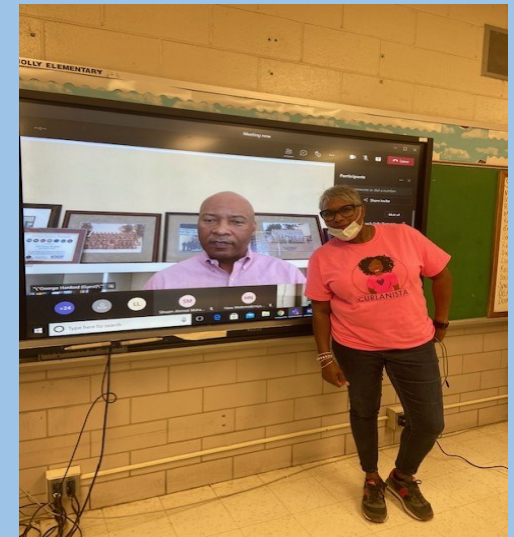
 Mrs. Sherri Crayton-Brown
Student Engagement Coach



Career Day – Jolly Elementary & Check & Connect



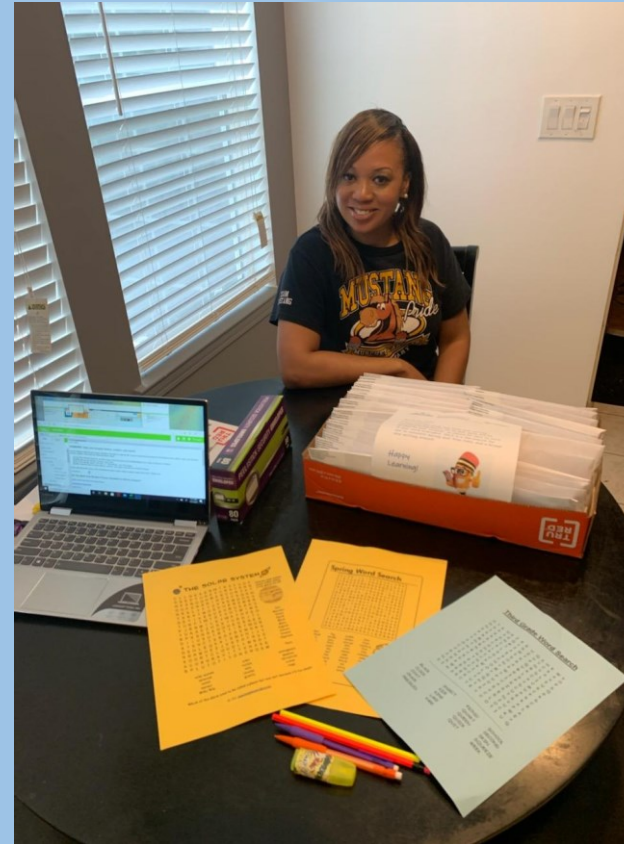
Lori Hansford – Student Engagement Coach & Principal Grandison



Check & Connect Engagement During COVID-19



Connecting with the students using Microsoft Teams



Mailing encouragement letters to the students.



Supporting the DCSD partnership with AFB to feed the students & families.



Crisp County Schools

Crisp County School System Check and Connect



Kristen Stokes, Director for Special Education

GOAL



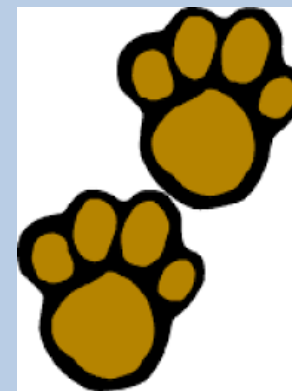
- Foster Graduation Rate
- Supplemental support to students that are in need
- Enhance academic achievement, school attendance, and decrease behavior referrals

TARGETS

- Crisp County was found disproportionate in the area of discipline removal of special education students.
- Serves students in grades 6-12
- Currently serving approximately 150 students in middle, high, and alternative school

CHECK AND CONNECT

- One Coordinator and two Mentors
- Works with individual students and families
- Builds constructive relationships
- Fosters family active participation in their child's education



CHECK AND CONNECT

- Coordinator and mentor work individually with students, face-to-face, or virtually
- Sessions may include topics about each student's individual needs and intensive interventions based on disengagement, lack of academic performance, behavior, or attendance.
- Provide individual interventions to help students solve problems and build skills that are needed to be successful in school and life situations

CHECK AND CONNECT

- Coordinator and mentors work within each building to support teachers and administrators.
- Classroom observations along with school records and anecdotal evidence is utilized for students.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **100% of our Seniors involved in Check and Connect graduated last spring.**
- We have seen an increase in graduation rates and attendance.
- We have seen a decrease in discipline referrals and removals.



Crisp County Check and Connect Video May 5 2021



**CHECK &
CONNECT**

Free Check and Connect Resources to Support Student Engagement

- **Check and Connect Free Modules and Resources**
- **Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)** - The Student Engagement Instrument (SEI™) is a brief 35 item self-reporting survey measuring cognitive and affective engagement. Data allows school professionals to gain insights into a student's sense of control, intrinsic motivation, and future aspirations (cognitive engagement factors).

For More Information

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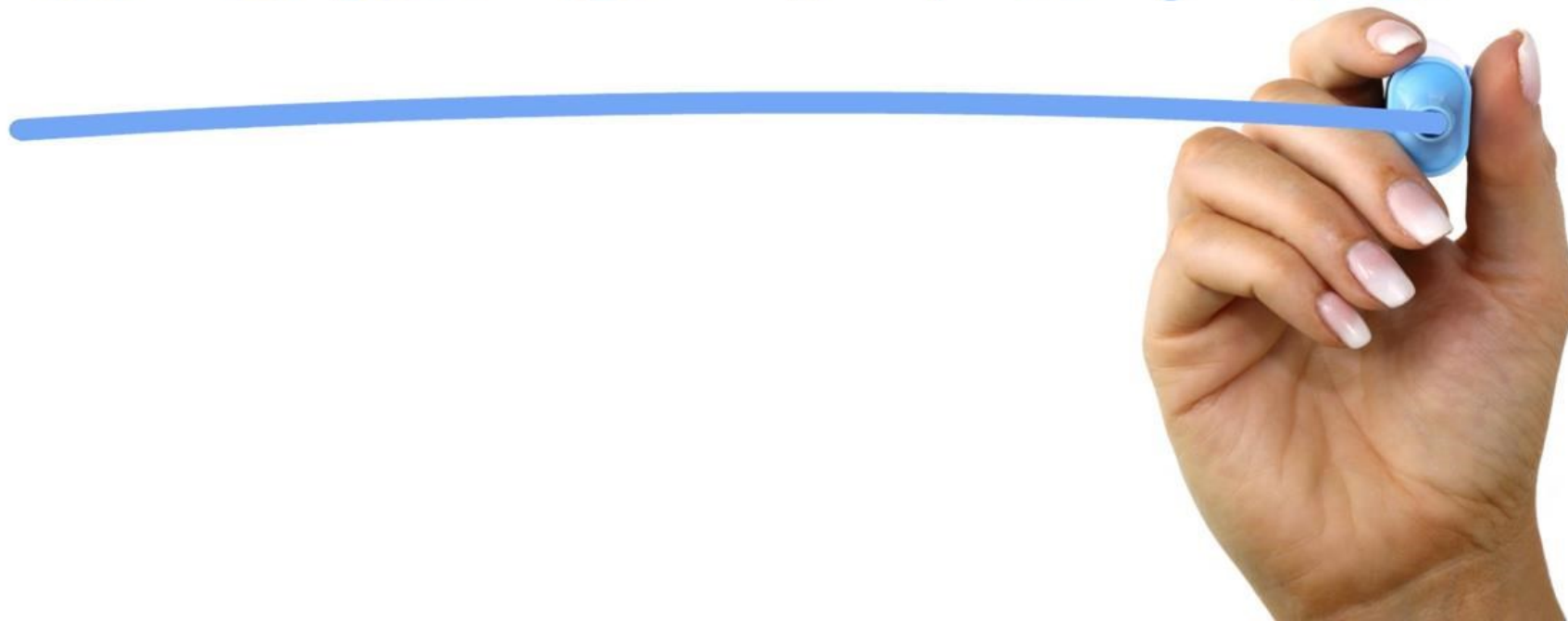
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QUESTIONS



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