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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Check &amp; Connect</th>
<th>Traditional Mentoring Programs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School engagement focus</td>
<td>• Social/emotional focus</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Research based</td>
<td>• Varies depending on school and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Data driven</td>
<td>• Potential positive outcomes, but not empirically proven</td>
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<td>• Structured not prescriptive</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Included intensive intervention</td>
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<td>• Targeted risk factors</td>
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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

  - The only dropout prevention intervention to show positive effects for staying in school
<table>
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<th><strong>Core Components</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Mentor</strong></td>
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<td>• Relationship building</td>
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<td>• Long-term commitment</td>
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<td>• Persistence-Plus</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Check</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Systematic monitoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Focus on alterable variables</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Connect</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Problem solving</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Capacity building</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personalized, data-based intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promoting participation/affiliation with school</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement with Families</strong></td>
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<td>• Connect, partner, and engage with parents/families</td>
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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

Ann Cross, Program Manager GLRS/SSIP

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Check & Connect: A Large District’s Implementation

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DeKalb County School District
DeKalb County School District

140 SCHOOLS – Hybrid Model

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

15,500 EMPLOYESS (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)**
- 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

**Current 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

Out of School Suspension (Removal Days)

Pre-C&C: 13875
60% Decrease
2014-15: 8010
2015-16: 5545
2016-17:

DeKalb County School District
Initial Implementation
Second Cohort

Out of School Suspensions
Removal Days

36% Decrease
• **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”

Mrs. Sherri Crayton-Brown welcomed her students back to the building by greeting them with personalized gift bags filled with their favorite snacks.

Check & Connect
March 15, 2021 First Day Back in the Building

WELCOME BACK

Mrs. Sherri Crayton-Brown
Student Engagement Coach

Cohort B
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
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
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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