Celebrating Check & Connect Research and Practice Highlights Across 25 years
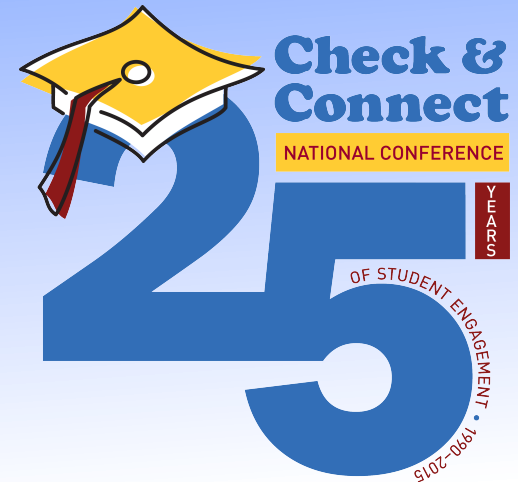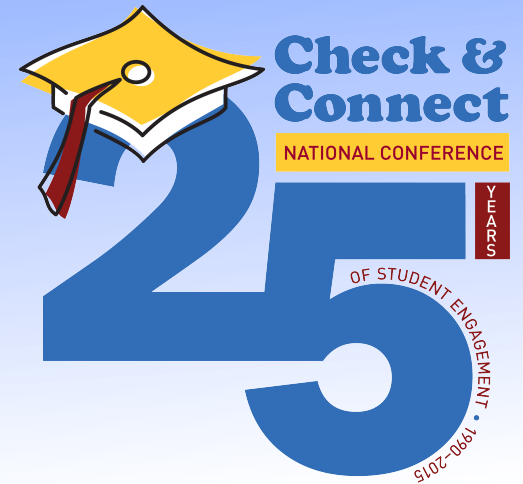
Dr. Sandra L. Christenson
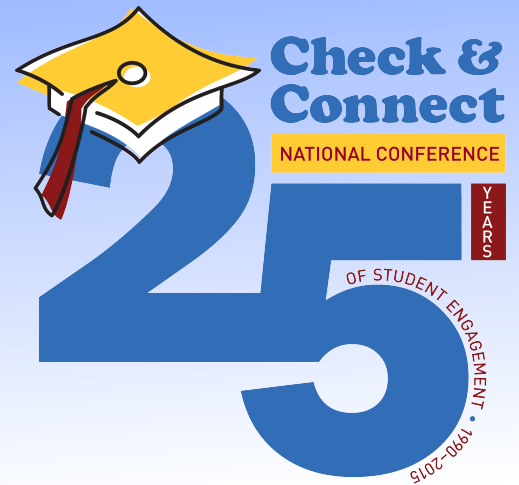
October 7, 2015

Check &
Connect
NATIONAL CONFERENCE
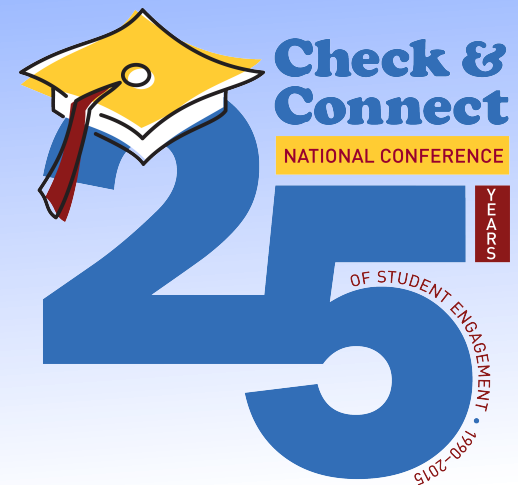
25
YEARS

OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT · 1990-2015

Do you know these students?

The development of
Check & Connect was unique.
We began right.

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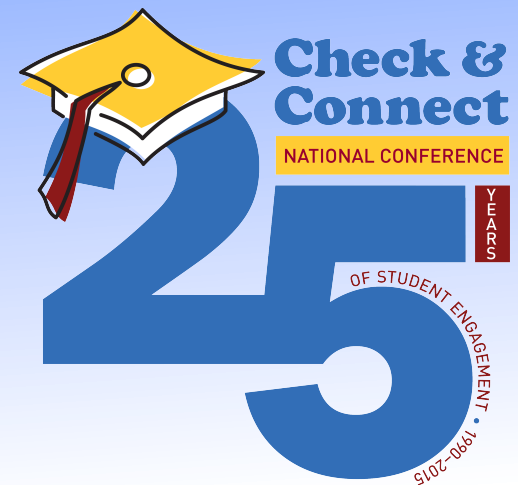
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Lesson Learned

- The powerful effect of both researcher and practitioner input in the planning year – **science and practice** – for the design of Check & Connect cannot be ignored.

- Comprised of 4 components – checking, connecting, mentor (also referred to as a monitor, advocate, coach), and parent engagement
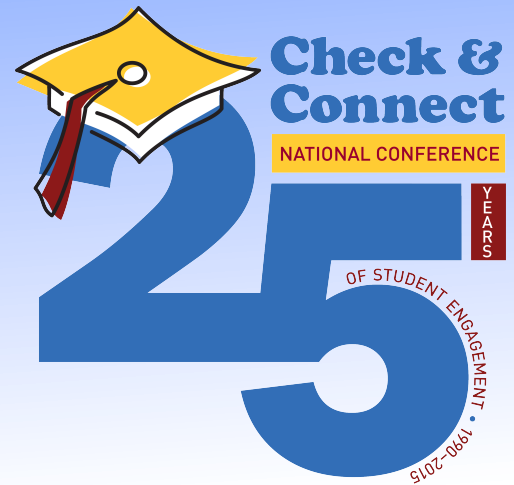
The impact of Check & Connect was established in studies that stressed fidelity
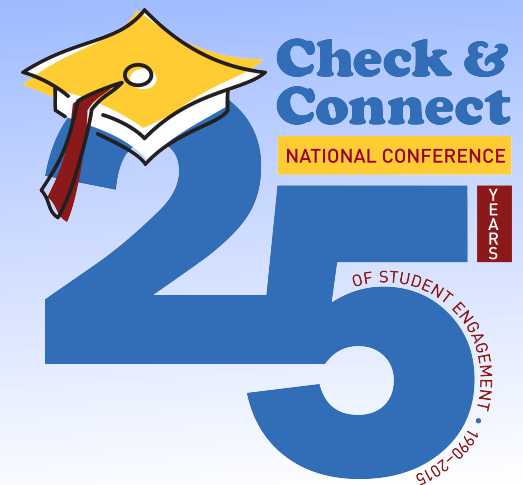of implementation and used random assignment.

Lesson Learned

- Research design led to significant interest in use of Check & Connect both by other researchers and practitioners

- Effectiveness research where the intervention was adapted to specific school based contexts occurred

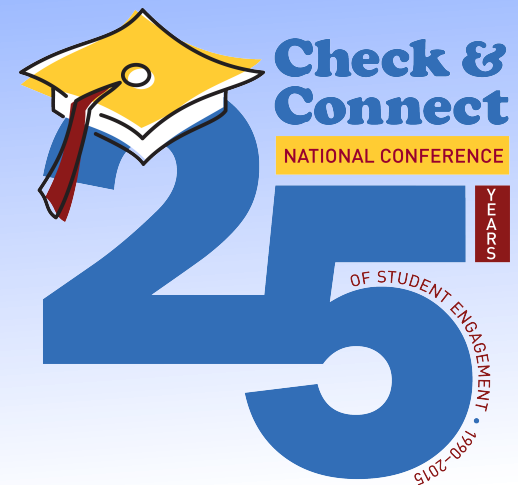- **Converging evidence** – keeping students in schools

The clearly delineated components and elements of Check & Connect paved the way for our describing it as a model to engage students.
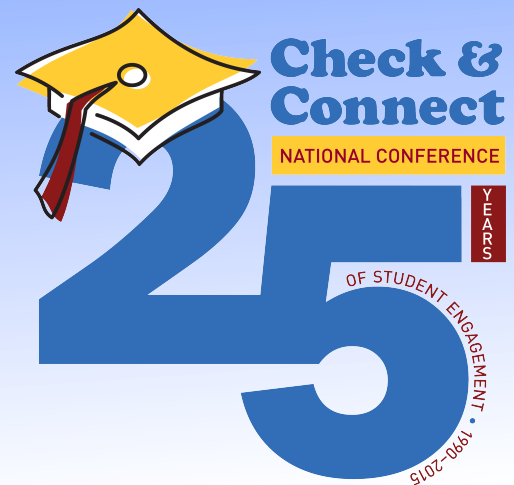
Lesson Learned

- Impact on different referral concerns and could be adapted to a specific school context
- We began to think of Check & Connect as a **service delivery mechanism or model** rather than a program
- Essential elements explained why and how to engage students

Student engagement is a multidimensional construct. We want students to be engaged academically, behaviorally, cognitively, and affectively.

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Subtypes of Engagement
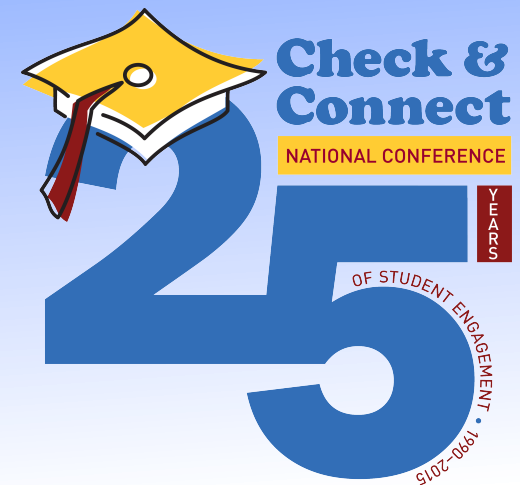
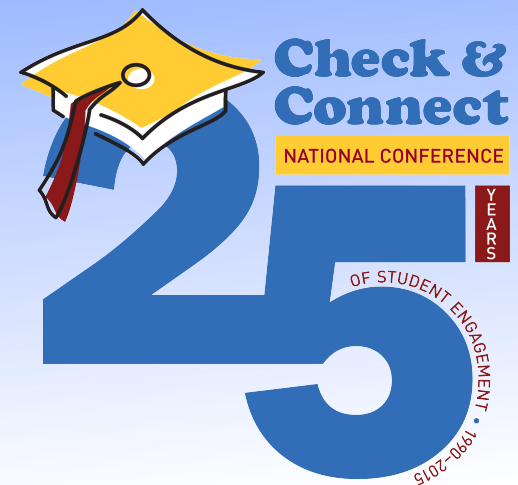| Subtype	Observable indicators
Academic	Time on task, academic engaged time, accrual of credits
Behavioral	Attendance, fewer suspensions, classroom participation

Subtype	Internal indicators
Cognitive	Perceived relevance of schoolwork, self-regulation toward goals, personal expectations for success
Affective	Identification with school, belonging, perceived connection at school with teachers and peers

Check & Connect
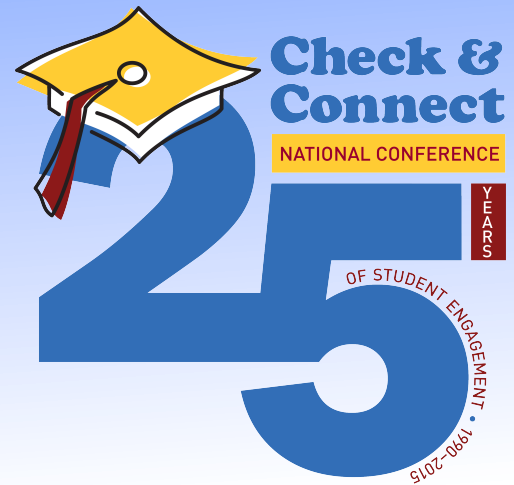NATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Lesson Learned

- **Attend to students' intellectual and emotional feelings** about school and about their ability to succeed

- SEI - a reliable and valid way to measure students' cognitive and affective engagement

- Focus on motivation and engagement variables to enhance academic performance.
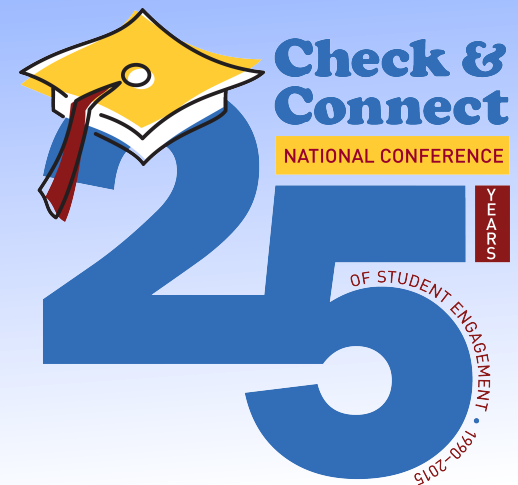
The demand for professional staff development locally, nationally, and internationally was initiated by the 2006 WWC review of dropout prevention programs.
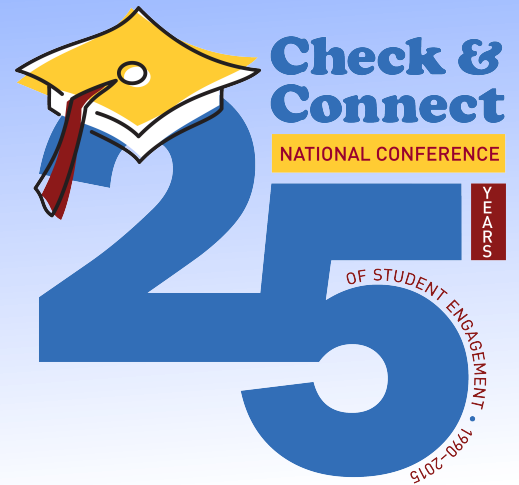
Lesson Learned

- Educators are interested in scientifically based practice and **training is essential** for fidelity of implementation.
- A second manual in 2008.
- Check & Connect is not a manualized, highly prescriptive or scripted intervention:
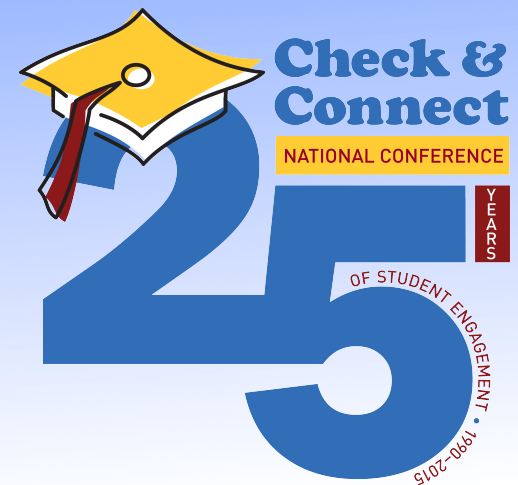 - mentors make decisions
  - role of relationships

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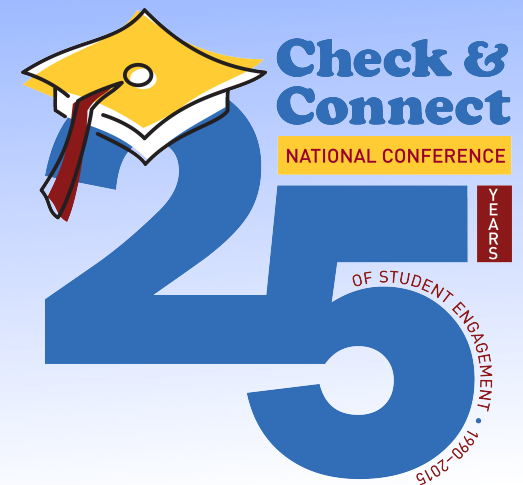Interventions must be dynamic, meeting the needs of students across time.

Lesson Learned

- The **role of the coordinator** in implementing Check & Connect is essential.
  - Coordinators must continually support mentors by providing ongoing training
  - Staying abreast of new research based content that is associated with student engagement
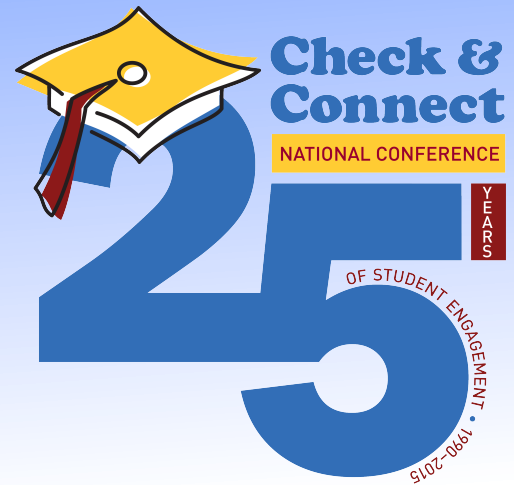 - Mentor is the conduit for training to occur

Recent longitudinal studies have helped us understand for whom and under what conditions Check & Connect is most effective.
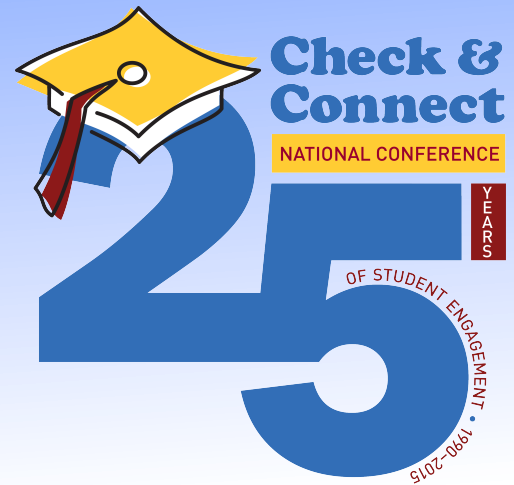
Lesson Learned

- Our results consistently are converging.

- Evidence that Check & Connect improves school attendance and retention rates

- **Relationships, problem solving, and persistent support keep disengaged learners in school**
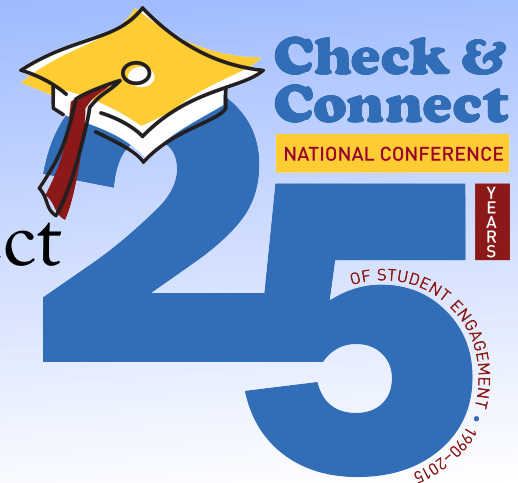
There are many exciting examples of sustainability of Check & Connect locally, nationally, and internationally.
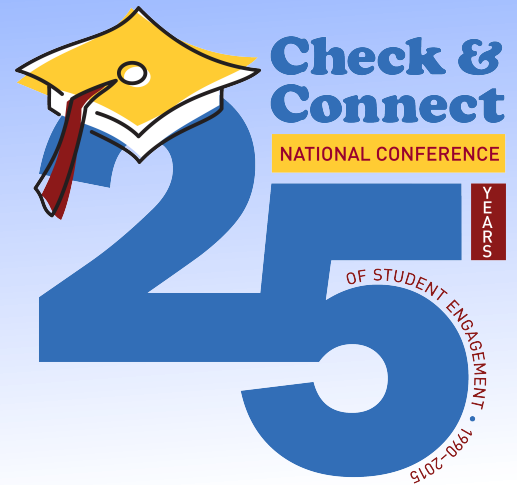
Lesson Learned

- Check & Connect is a **targeted intervention designed to be used with effective universal practices.** We now have several examples and research data to conclude that this statement is well supported.

- School districts and researchers are using our theory of student engagement as well as implementing the Check & Connect student engagement model – both are signs of sustainability.
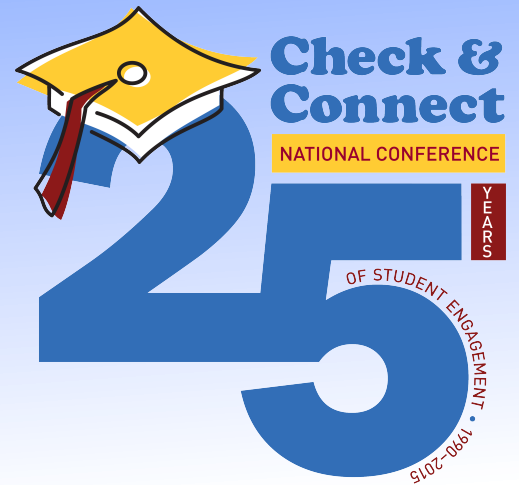
Final thoughts

- We cannot have the same impact for disengaged, marginalized students without universal and supplemental support interventions.

- This is not a situation of either/or, but both /and.

Engaging the disengaged

Thank you for your efforts.