

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Check & Connect?

Check & Connect is a mentoring program focusing on increasing students' engagement at school and with learning as a means to improve student outcomes.

Where is it implemented?

Check & Connect is most often implemented at the building, district, region, or even state level in elementary, middle, and high schools. Community-based organizations like the Boys & Girls Club of America and Communities In Schools are also using Check & Connect in conjunction with schools. In some areas, the Department of Corrections are using Check & Connect to help adjudicated youth transition back into their home communities and to prevent recidivism.

What grade levels are served?

Check & Connect can be used with students in elementary, middle, and high school. Many researchers and educators have argued that addressing truancy at an early age is critical to later school success.

Who can be a mentor?

Existing staff (teachers, counselors, administrators), newly hired staff (with single role of mentor), and community volunteers can all serve as Check & Connect mentors. The important factor, regardless of who fills the role of mentor, is that the mentor embodies the personal characteristics of an effective Check & Connect mentor. Existing staff should not be *required* to serve as mentors; staff must be *willing* to serve as mentors. When adding mentoring duties to staff members' existing duties, it is suggested that other duties be

removed and reassigned or that the staff be compensated monetarily for their time.

How was Check & Connect developed and when?

Research on Check & Connect began in 1990 with five years of funding support from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education. The principal investigators on this grant were Drs. Bruininks, Thurlow, and Christenson, but many professionals from Minneapolis Public Schools were instrumental in obtaining the initial funding. Most importantly, the development of Check & Connect (1990-1995) was a collaborative effort between researchers at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), University of Minnesota, and school-based professionals in Minneapolis Public Schools. All subsequent research on Check & Connect has been based at ICI.

What is the evidence for Check & Connect?

Through rigorous research, Check & Connect has been found to lead to **increased** credit accrual, persistence rates, graduation rates, and perceived parental participation in school; and **reduced** absences, tardiness, dropout rates, and behavior referrals for students with and without disabilities (Lehr et al., 2004; Sinclair et al., 1998; Sinclair et al., 2005). Of the dropout prevention interventions reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, Check & Connect is the only program found to have strong evidence of positive effects for staying in school. For more information, see the Research tab on our website at checkandconnect.umn.edu/research.



How does Check & Connect fit with existing initiatives (PBIS, RtI, etc.)?

Check & Connect is a targeted or intensive intervention designed to complement universal strategies in your school. A guiding principle of Check & Connect is to use existing services in schools and communities whenever possible to enhance protective factors for the student/family and maximize scarce resources. Check & Connect, although designed as a stand-alone program, has also been used with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Response to Intervention (RtI), Early Warning Systems (EWS), Credit Recovery, and other support models.

To what contexts has Check & Connect been adapted?

Check & Connect can serve students in contexts besides traditional K-12 schools, such as after-school programs, juvenile justice facilities, community programs, and college. See Adaptations for Other Contexts for recent Check & Connect adaptation projects through the Institute on Community Integration.

What training is available for sites implementing Check & Connect?

We offer **Preparation and Implementation Training** for administrators and decision-makers interested in planning for implementation, **Mentor Training** for new or existing Check & Connect mentors to train them for their new role, and **Comprehensive Training** for administrators, decision-makers, AND new or existing Check & Connect mentors (*a hybrid of the above two trainings*). For sites already implementing Check & Connect and

interested in follow-up assistance, we offer the **Fidelity of Implementation Follow-up Workshop**. For more information, visit the Training & Consultation tab at checkandconnect.umn.edu/training_consultation.

Is the manual alone sufficient for implementing Check & Connect?

Yes, the Check & Connect manual provides complete information for implementing the program; however, training is encouraged to assist in skill development and implementing with fidelity. In fact, sites that were trained after years of implementing with only the manual found it very useful!

What is the cost of implementing Check & Connect?

The cost of implementing Check & Connect is site-specific and depends on many factors such as who is serving as mentors (existing staff, newly hired dedicated mentors, and/or community volunteers), number of mentors needed, number of students served, and training conducted. For a training cost estimate, please contact us at 1-866-434-0010 or checkandconnect@umn.edu.

How can sites fund Check & Connect?

If hiring full-time, dedicated mentors, sites may wish to seek funding through local educational or philanthropic foundations that award grants, state department of education's (SEA's) statewide dropout prevention initiatives, or federal education funding sources. For more information, see our Implementations Options & Funding Tips flyer at checkandconnect.umn.edu/implementation/tools.html.



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