

CHECK & CONNECT



**A comprehensive student
engagement intervention**

WHAT IS CHECK & CONNECT

- Developed by the University of Minnesota
- A research-based model of sustained intervention used to enhance and maintain students' engagement with school.
- Approved through the What Works Clearinghouse
- DESE Approved



WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM CHECK AND CONNECT:

- Children and youth with and without disabilities
- Students in Kindergarten through 12th grade
- Students in Urban, Suburban and Rural settings



4 ASSUMPTIONS THAT DROVE THIS PROJECT

- Dropping out is not instantaneous
- Solving problems require the effort of school, home, community and student
- Student empowerment is essential
- Schools much reach out to families and community



WHICH OF OUR STUDENTS ARE DROPPING OUT?

- 37% of all students with disabilities
- 36% of students with a learning disability
- 55% of students with an emotional or behavioral disability.

*National Center for Educational Statistics (1993)



PREDICTORS OF DROPPING OUT

○ **Status Variables**

- Socioeconomic status
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Family structure
- Disability
- IQ

○ **Alterable Variables**

- Attendance, suspensions
- Extracurricular participation
- Grades, credits earned
- Age to grade level
- Parental support for learning
- School outreach
- Access to community resources



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING IDEAS



WAYS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Sharing Food
- Positive calls home
- High Fives
- Notice if they have something new on/hairstyle
- Attending a event
 - Concerts
 - Athletic Events
- Have them help you with something
- Celebrate Student Success
- Engage them
- See what they like
 - Skateboarding, Sports, etc....



UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE MODEL:

- Long-term commitment to youth
- Interventions are individualized to meet each student's needs
 - Participation in school
 - Identification with school
 - Academic performance
 - Social/behavior performance
- Works collaboratively with school, home and community.
- Teaches students to be self-managers



MENTORING APPROACH

- Student's engagement with school is a process that needs to be built on resiliency thru mentoring-type approach.
 - Presence of an adult in the child's life to fuel motivation and foster development of life skills needed to overcome obstacles.
 - Make youth feel unique, special, good about themselves
 - Mentors model positive attitudes and behaviors
 - Help youth discover solutions to their problems, promote self-reliance
 - Help youth look beyond today



ROLE OF MONITOR (MENTOR)

- Communicate relevance and importance of education to the student and parents
- Facilitate positive relationships with staff and peers
- Recognize and help students address outside factors impacting learning
- Talking with teachers to gather and share information about student progress
- Contacting parents by phone or home visits to share information and develop a plan to re-engage students in school
- Talking with students about their academic progress and what assistance they think is needed
- Arrange for tutoring before or after school
- Providing students and families with information about community services and agencies.



ROLE OF MONITOR CONT.

- Writing contracts with students, teachers, and parents to develop alternatives to disciplinary actions that might lead to withdrawal
- Be persistent with students and families.
- Believe that all kids have abilities
- Willing to work closely with families
- Advocate for students and teach them to advocate for themselves.



WHO CAN BE A MONITOR/MENTOR

- Teachers
- Case Managers
- Social Workers
- Intervention Staff
- School Psychologists
- Community Advocates

Goal of monitors- to prevent students from slipping through the cracks



CHECK & CONNECT COMPONENTS

- **Check**- to systematically assess students' connections to school
- **Connect**- to regularly respond to students educational needs according to their type and level of risk of disengagement.



CHECK- TO SYSTEMATICALLY ASSESS STUDENTS' CONNECTIONS TO SCHOOL

- Tardiness
- Absenteeism, excused and unexcused (don't discriminate between the two, gone is gone)
- Problem Behaviors
- Suspensions-in and out of school
- Academic performance, course failure



CONNECT-TO REGULARLY RESPOND TO STUDENTS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ACCORDING TO THEIR TYPE AND LEVEL OF RISK OF DISENGAGEMENT.

○ Basic Intervention

- Structured conversations- weekly
- General information about monitor's role
- Regular Feedback on educational progress
- Discussions about importance of staying in school
- Problem solving around indicators of engagement, making good choices



CONNECT-

○ Intensive Interventions

- Individualized strategies to promote participation and identification with school
 - Academic Tutoring
 - Academic Contract
 - Behavior Contract
- Emphasis on problem solving with students, staff and caregivers.

Examples:

Course failure- review importance of accruing credits toward graduation and develop a plan to address make up work, to stay on track and to get assistance.

Continued Absence- identify strategies with the student and parents to help the student get to school on time daily.
Home visit to bring student to school and meet with parent.



How it all started

- 2005-06
 - Graduation: 68.87
 - Drop-Out: 6.8
- 2006-07
 - Graduation: 76.92
 - Drop-Out: 5.6
- 2007-08
 - Graduation: 82.05
 - Drop-Out: 4.07



Missouri Improvement Grant

- 2009-10 will be 4th year for grant, 3rd year for Check & connect
- Found C & C on “What works clearinghouse” website



Identification of Students

- Ruby Payne's "A Framework for Understanding Poverty"
 - Generational Poverty
 - Low Value placed on education
 - Students "know of" people who dropped out of school and "made it big"
 - Meeting everyday needs is greater than need to attend school and graduate



Choosing Students for C & C

- Looked at previous data for 2 years
 - # of failed classes
 - Chronic attendance problems
 - Discipline/behavioral problems
 - History of siblings dropping out
- Students chosen were the toughest special education students in Raytown
- Grades 9-12



What do mentors “check”

- Tardies 3 or more a month
- Skipping 1 or more a month
- Absent 3 or more a month
- Behavior referrals 2 or more a month
- Detentions 2 or more a month
- ISS/OSS 2 or more a month
- Deficient credits 1 or more F's



C & C Concerns

- Raytown is not perfect at implementation, but improve each year
- Program cannot stand alone
- Need to get other staff involved, not just mentors
- Improve parent involvement
- How do we get students to COME to school
- Student mobility-transfers in and out of district
- HS discipline/attendance policy



What to do next year....

- Focus on vocational component of students' needs
- Work with MO Options staff and students
- C & C mentors attend department meetings at beginning of year to “advertise” program
- Continually discuss C & C students at Sp Ed department meetings with all case managers
- Invite C & C mentors to IEP meetings
- Mentors visit middle schools
- Service Learning
- Chart progress of students every meeting
- Support groups with C & C students
- Parent Meetings???????

