

Check & Connect
Introduction to the Model

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PaTTAN's Mission



The mission of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

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PDE's Commitment to Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



Our goal for each child is to ensure Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams begin with the general education setting with the use of Supplementary Aids and Services before considering a more restrictive environment.

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Pennsylvania SSIP Theory of Action

Vision: All students with disabilities will be academically, behaviorally, and socially-emotionally engaged in order to stay in school, graduate, and become contributing members of society.

Strands of Action	If PDE	Then	Then	Then
Leadership	Communicates its vision effectively and provides guidance and general supervision in a timely and responsive manner.	LEAs will have the information, support, and resources necessary to align their efforts to PDE's vision. LEAs will have uniformly high expectations for all students with disabilities.	*Local Educational Agencies in Pennsylvania will:* 1. Utilize data systems to identify, inform, monitor and increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities. *Early Warning System Data Tools. Diagnostic intervention.* 2. Implement increasingly intensive evidence-based methodologies toward improved academic outcomes. *MTSS academic support, culturally responsive instruction. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.* 3. Implement increasingly intensive evidence-based methodologies toward improved social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. *MTSS behavior support and social skills, school climate, engagement of adult advocates, culturally responsive practices, behavioral health, mentors, Check and Connect. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.* 4. Promote the implementation of attendance strategies and alternative programming that will increase the likelihood of graduation. *Credit recovery, after school/night school, online learning, school re-entry. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.* 5. Ensure culturally responsive learning environments and instructional practices. *Culturally responsive instructional practices. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.* 6. Embrace a philosophy of partnership that empowers families and communities to become more meaningfully involved. *Family engagement, mentoring, partnering with federally funded centers - PTIs and CPRCs. Schoolwide, targeted, and community interventions.* 7. Provide rigorous and relevant instruction to better engage students in learning and provide the skills needed to graduate and have positive post school outcomes. *Transition, college prep courses, career and technical training, life skills training, socially related employment skills. Schoolwide and targeted interventions.*	Pennsylvania will increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities. Pennsylvania will reduce the number of students with risk factors that impact the likelihood of school completion.
Collaboration	Partners with LEAs, federally funded TA providers, PTIs/CPRCs and other state and local agencies that serve students with disabilities and their families.	PDE will leverage resources to improve services for students with disabilities.		
Technical Assistance	Promotes professional learning opportunities to effectively prepare and empower stakeholders to support students with disabilities.	LEAs will facilitate shared leadership toward enhanced collaboration and implementation of evidenced-based practices. CPRC will develop materials and resources to be shared with other community organizations.		
Accountability	Holds LEAs accountable for effectively implementing assessment and evaluation practices to measure outcomes.	LEAs will have systems that lead to improved results for students with disabilities and protect the rights of students and families.		

Evaluation: Data Collection – Data Analysis – Data Interpretation – Reporting

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Check & Connect Overview

Check & Connect is a structured mentoring intervention to promote student success and engagement at school and with learning through relationship building and systematic use of data.



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What Does it Mean to Enhance Student Engagement?

- Defined as:
  - commitment to and investment in learning
  - identification and belonging at school
- Student engagement is the bottom line in school completion programs
  (Grannis, 1994)



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What is the Goal of Check & Connect?



School Completion

- Graduation WITH sufficient academic and social competence to move successfully into the postsecondary world

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Components of Check & Connect



① A Mentor
② Check
③ Connect
④ Family Engagement

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Core Elements of Check & Connect

Mentor	• Relationship building • Long-term commitment- Peristence 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

Fit With Existing Initiatives



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Research Findings



- Implemented with K-12 students with and without disabilities, nationally and internationally
- Rigorous research studies conducted:
  - 2 randomized control trials with HS students with disabilities in 1998 and 2005
  - 4 replication studies
  - Continued efficacy studies

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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)

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What Works Clearinghouse



- Check & Connect has met the evidence standards of the What Works Clearinghouse:
  - In 2006, C&C was found to be the only intervention that showed positive effects for *staying in school* http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/
  - **WWC updated Reviews of Dropout Prevention 2015**, C&C continues to be the only intervention that shows positive effects for *staying in school*

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5 Steps to Getting Started



1. Identifying the target population – Early Warning System (EWS)
2. Hire/assign staff to Coordinator and Mentor positions
3. Mentors "Check" on student educational progress
4. Mentors "Connect" with students
5. Mentors engage with families

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1. Identify Target Population



- Who is at-risk of disengagement?
- Establish criteria for participation in C&C
  - Academic engagement
    - Time on task
    - Credit accrual
    - Homework completion
    - Engagement in class activities
  - Behavior Engagement
    - Attendance
    - Suspensions
    - Participating in school activities
    - Tardiness

Sample Criteria



- Secondary School:
  - Attend < 80-90% of the time
  - Have 3 disciplinary referrals
  - One or more failing grades in a semester
- Elementary school:
  - Less than 88% attendance
  - Performing academically in the bottom quartile of their class

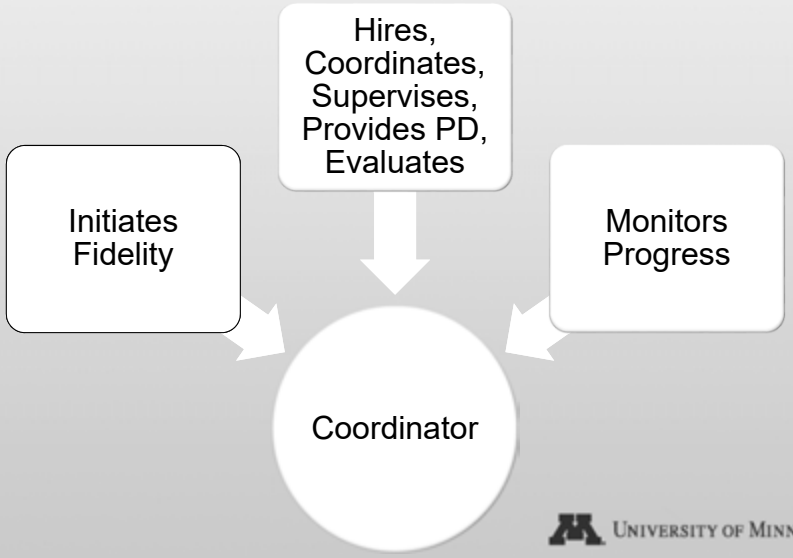
How Are Participants Selected?

- Data screening
  - A pool of candidates meeting the criteria is generated by looking at school data
  - Students not receiving other interventions or intensive services are then invited to participate
- Referral
  - School personnel are made aware of the criteria
  - A referral process is established for referring students who meet criteria to Check & Connect

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2. Hire/Assign Staff: Coordinator



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2. Hire/Assign Staff: Mentors



- Desirable Characteristics:
  - Willingness to be a mentor
  - Personal belief that all students can learn, make progress, change their level of engagement, and be successful in school
  - Belief in the power and value of problem solving WITH students to develop competencies
  - Willingness to persist with students despite their behavior or decision making

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Who Can Serve as Mentor?



- Outside hire
  - BA in education or human services related field or equivalent education and experience
  - Experience working with youth
- Existing staff
  - Teachers, case managers, counselors, school psychologists, social workers, educational assistants
- Community volunteers
- Job description – page 32 in *Implementing with Fidelity*

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3. Mentors "CHECK"



CHECK

Academic data	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	High risk
Number of Ds or Fs				5				4						4						3	X
Number of missing assignments				9				12						17						14	X
Cumulative grades	1st quarter grades 2 Ds 2 Fs					2nd quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					3rd quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					4th quarter grades ___Ds ___Fs					X
Credit accrual	6 Credits earned out of 12 total possible															1.7 GPA					X
Met state academic standards	Math: ❑ Yes ❑ No					Reading: ❑ Yes ❑ No										Writing: ❑ Yes ❑ No					
Behavior data	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	M	TU	W	TH	F	High risk
Tardy																					
Skipping classes	1								1							1					X
Unexcused/unverified absence																					
Excused absence		X																X			
Behavior referral/infraction																					
Detention																					
Suspension (in school/out-of-school)																					

4. Mentors "CONNECT"

- Interventions are personalized & data-based
- Match to student need- use "CHECK" data to determine type and level of risk of disengagement
  - All targeted students receive ***Basic Intervention***
  - Students showing high-risk behaviors receive additional ***Intensive Interventions***

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5. Mentors Engage with Families

- Liaison between the home & school
- Enhance communication with families
- Invite parents to partner
- Connect with resources
- Inform parents about educational progress
- Problem solve WITH families



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Additional Implementation Steps



- Organize existing resources
- Monitor the person-environment fit
- Evaluate program implementation

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Training

- Teams
  - Coordinator
  - Mentors
  - Administrator/Designee
- Materials will be provided.
- 2 day training session

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High-Quality Resources



- PaTTAN - Increasing Graduation Rates and Decreasing Drop-Out Rates http://www.pattan.net/
  - Educational Initiatives; Increasing Graduation Rates and Decreasing Drop-Out Rates
- Website and blog w/ research findings, articles, implementation highlights, etc. checkandconnect.umn.edu
- Watch for monthly emails with tips/tools, blog posts, upcoming trainings, and national news & resources.
- Join the C&C community!
  - Sign up to join the Discussion list
  - Follow our blog & social media: Blog | Facebook | Twitter
  - Coordinators - sign up to join the Coordinator's Community of Practice
- Contact us: checkandconnect@umn.edu | 866-434-0010

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