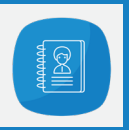


Check & Connect



QUICK FACTS

Service: Check & Connect

Service Category: Foundational

Pipeline: Mentoring & Other Youth Development Programs

Provider: Central Regional Education Association

Contact Information:

Anne Williamson, Community Coordinator
Central Regional Education Association
Anne.Williamson@k12.nd.us, 701-340-5026

What it is:

Check & Connect is an evidence-based intervention intended for K-12 students who show warning signs of disengagement and are at risk of dropping out. Check & Connect pairs each student with a caring, trained Mentor who can monitor performance and provide personalized, timely interventions to help solve problems, build skills, and enhance competence. Since the 1990s, Check & Connect has been implemented across 48 states.

HOW IT WORKS

Unlike many dropout prevention programs, Check & Connect places its emphasis on relationships. A Mentor functions as a liaison between student, family, and school, building a strong relationship that is based on mutual trust and open communication.

Who can become a Mentor depends on each school's individual preferences and resources. It could be a current or former educator, or a passionate community member. Above all, it must be a caring adult who has a belief that all kids can succeed and is willing to provide persistent guidance and support.

To help build constructive family-school relationships, Mentors are asked to commit to two years of service with students and their families.



NORTH DAKOTA
FULL-SERVICE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM

Using the power of
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**CHECK &
CONNECT**

"This is a relationship program. We all know that trust and relationships take time," said Anne Williamson, Check & Connect Program Coordinator at CREA. "I've spoken to Mentors who have said, 'Man, it took me six months to get this kid to even talk to me.'"

The "Check" component of this intervention consists of Mentors conducting weekly reviews of the student's ABCs: attendance, behavior, and coursework. This data informs the "Connect" component, in which Mentors provide personalized, timely interventions to help students solve problems, build skills, increase engagement, and emphasize the importance of staying in school.

Between checking student data and connecting one-on-one with the student, Mentors can expect to spend about one hour

per week on each student on their caseload. Connections with students happen in school, during school hours, to help ensure student attendance.

“These kids already have a lot going on in their lives,” Williamson said. “We have to meet them where they are at.”

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 on staying in school. Nationwide, its impacts are shown to include increased attendance, persistence in school, credit accrual, and school completion rates, as well as a decrease in truancy, tardies, behavioral referrals, and dropouts.

In September 2021, Minot’s Washington Elementary became the first North Dakota Full Service Community School to launch Check & Connect. In the program’s first year, the school has already witnessed significant impacts on individual students.

“One student who was matched with a Mentor through Check & Connect had a lot of attendance concerns last year, and his attendance has improved already this year. Those are the outcomes we can expect to see,” Williamson said. “When this program is implemented with fidelity, student engagement improves, family engagement improves, and they do better in school.”

HOW TO DO IT

Schools interested in learning more about Check & Connect, including the program’s history, national outcomes, and funding opportunities, are encouraged to visit checkandconnect.umn.edu. To bring Check & Connect to your school, please reach out to Anne Williamson directly:

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Central Regional Education Association
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WHO WE ARE

We are a Consortium representing a variety of ND schools and organizations who are passionate about helping ND students and families succeed.



WHAT WE DO

We partner with local leaders to coordinate comprehensive supports in areas such as wellness, workforce readiness, and academic enrichment to help students, families, and communities thrive.



WHY WE DO IT

Students cannot learn when their basic needs are not met. Not all schools have the resources to meet all needs. NDFSCS supports schools and community partners in navigating these challenges together.



North Dakota Full-Service Community Schools serve as a place and a set of collaborative partnerships that embrace a whole-child, whole-family approach to student success.

Visit ndfscs.org/providers to learn more.