

## What is Check & Connect?

### Student Engagement Intervention

Check & Connect is a structured mentoring program designed to enhance student engagement at school and with learning for marginalized, disengaged students in grades K-12, through relationship building, problem solving and capacity building, and persistence.

Check & Connect consists of four components:

- 1. MENTOR:** A mentor who works with students and families for a minimum of two years
- 2. CHECK:** Regular checks, utilizing data schools already collect on students' school adjustment, behavior, and educational progress
- 3. CONNECT:** Interventions to reestablish and maintain students' connection to school and learning and to enhance social and academic competencies
- 4. FAMILIES:** Mentors collaborate with parents/guardians and strive to foster their engagement

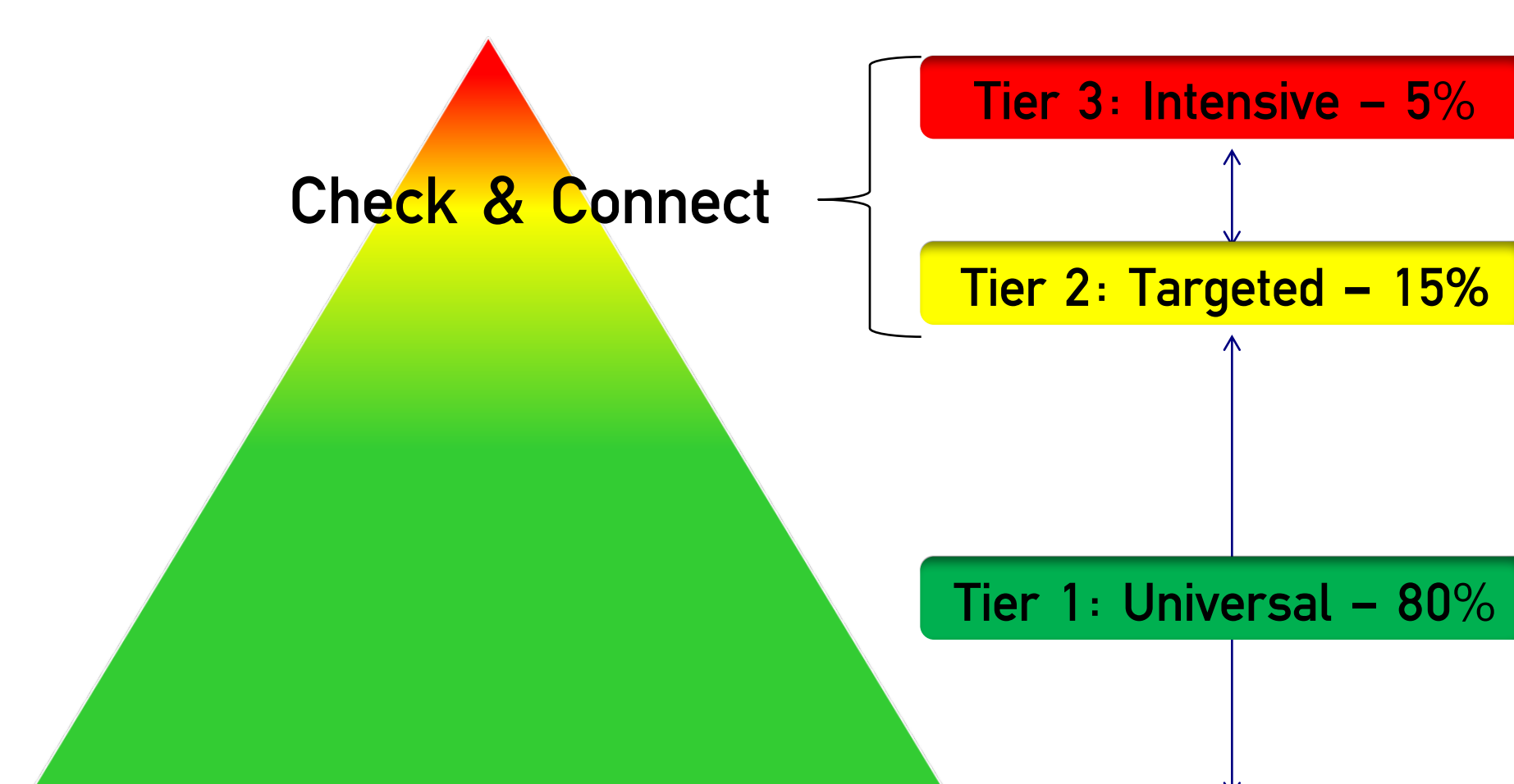
## How is C&C Used?

### Used with Various Populations

Check & Connect was originally developed to support students with disabilities; however, it has since been implemented with general education students, Native American youth, foster-care youth, adjudicated youth, postsecondary students, and youth in after-school settings.

### Used with Universal Interventions

Check & Connect is designed to complement universal, tier 1 strategies. Whether Check & Connect is a tier 2 or tier 3 intervention depends on a school's needs, capacity to serve students, and intensity of intervention.

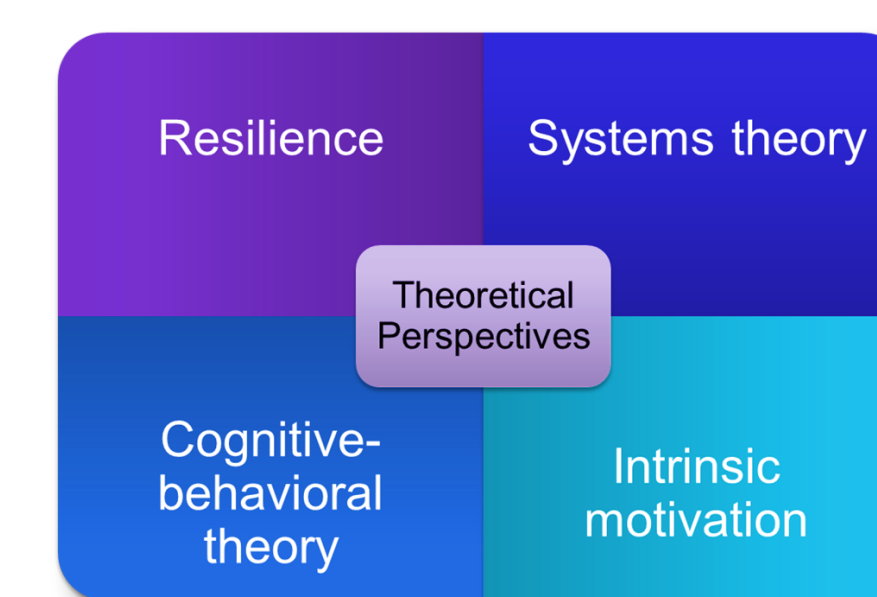


## Development Highlights

### 1990-1995: Original Research

Research began in 1990 with five years of funding from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education, directed by principal investigators Drs. Bruininks, Thurlow, and Christenson.

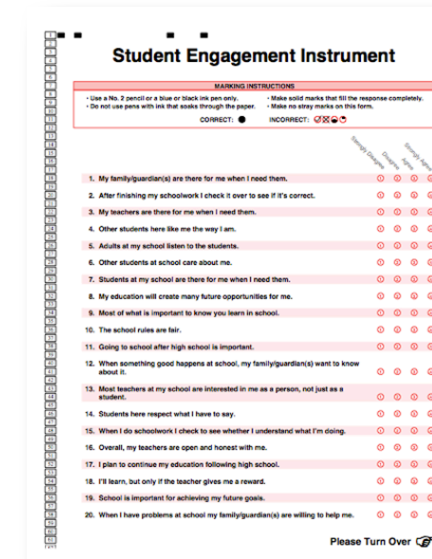
Development of Check & Connect was a collaborative effort between researchers at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration and professionals in Minneapolis Public Schools.



During development, the Check & Connect model was informed by the theories illustrated in the figure at left.

### 2003-2005: Subtypes of Engagement

A major focus on our theory of student engagement in Check & Connect occurred with the development and validation of the **Student Engagement Instrument (SEI)**. We conceptualize student engagement as multi-dimensional along four subtypes:



- 1. ACADEMIC:** e.g., time on task, credit accrual, homework completion
- 2. COGNITIVE:** e.g., perceived relevance of schoolwork, value of learning and success in school
- 3. AFFECTIVE:** e.g., identification with school, sense of belonging, school connectedness
- 4. BEHAVIORAL:** e.g., attendance, suspensions, participating in school activities, being on time

### 2006: Recognized by IES

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 (2006).



### 2008-2012: Implementation Manual

The most recent (2012) version of the implementation manual provides resources for site coordinators and mentors to implement Check & Connect with fidelity.



## Impact on Students

### Selected Research Findings

- **Check & Connect improves persistence, enrollment, access to relevant educational services, student involvement in IEP transition planning, and attendance for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities** (Sinclair, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2005).
- **The mentor-student relationship as provided in Check & Connect improves engagement for elementary students** (Anderson, Christenson, Sinclair, & Lehr, 2004).
- **Check & Connect improves engagement—specifically, attendance—for elementary students** (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004).
- **Check & Connect works to actively engage students and families at school and with learning** (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004).
- **Check & Connect improves outcomes for students with a history of truancy** (Sinclair & Kaibel, 2002).
- **As a sustained intervention, Check & Connect improves enrollment, attendance, and odds of graduation for students who are disengaged and at risk of dropout** (Sinclair, Christenson, Evelo, & Hurley, 1998).

## Recent Research

### Efficacy Studies

Efficacy trials in three large urban school districts are examining the question: For whom does Check & Connect work and under what conditions? These studies are examining the impact of Check & Connect on elementary and secondary students with and without disabilities.

#### San Diego Unified School District, CA American Institutes for Research

- Funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), U.S. Department of Education (U.S. DOE)
- Years: 2011-2014

#### San Jose Unified School District, CA SRI International

- Funded by IES, U.S. DOE
- Years: 2011-2015

#### Chicago Public Schools, IL University of Chicago & National Opinion Research Center

- Funded by IES, U.S. DOE and the National Institutes of Health
- Years: 2011-2015

## Implementation & Mentor Training Since 2009

Check & Connect trainers provide implementation training to staff in K-12 schools, districts, and community-based organizations across the U.S. and abroad. The map below indicates the number of on-site trainings conducted across the nation since 2009. Note that Check & Connect trainers also host several "open" trainings in Minnesota each year.

