**Check & Connect, an Evidence-Based Student Engagement Intervention**

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***For opportunities for Check & Connect training in Iowa, please contact your AEA PBIS Coordinator.***

Check & Connect is a project of the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota.

Visit [www.checkandconnect.org](http://www.checkandconnect.org) for more information

Materials presented on the foundational components of Check & Connect come from the following publication:

Christenson, S. L., Stout, K., & Pohl, A. (2012). Check & Connect: A comprehensive student engagement intervention: Implementing with fidelity. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration.



Table 4.4. Advice to Potential Teacher Mentors from Experienced Teacher Mentors

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| Focus area | Advice from Teacher Mentors in this study |
| 1. Time | “First thing is how much time do you have? It’s a big time commitment if you’re going to do it right.”  |
| 2. Limit the number of  mentees you take | “I would say maybe just do one to start just to really give it the time…just one to start and then if it’s going well, add more.” |
| 3. Be an experienced  teacher first | “As a new teacher you are going to be overwhelmed. “ “Be in the classroom for a few years and kind of understand the background of the kids and have a good handle on the curriculum, because this is time-consuming.” |
| 4. Be realistic | “Are you prepared to accept that you might not feel like you’re making a difference? You won’t automatically get the feeling that you’re saving the world.” |
| 5. You have to want to do it | “Definitely do it if being a mentor to kids is something you care about.” |
|  |  |
| 6. Don’t be afraid | “Don’t be afraid to put in the time. Don’t be afraid to give a piece of yourself to the kids and just be there for them, not just academics, but as a support system.” |
| 7. Believe in them | “Hold high Expectations. Don’t back down on them just because they are your mentee student. Make sure that you realize that these students can be successful.” |
| 8. Empower them | “Help kids build the skills that they need to succeed later in life. Don’t just be a crutch to them. Help them figure out the answers, but teach them ways that will carry on longer than you are their mentor.” |
| 9. Be positive and be there | “No matter what, even though it’s frustrating or they’re not responding…Be available and be patient.” |
| 10. Celebrate the small  successes | “Even if one day you see a change, consider the little triumphs, those little things that just make the world go round. It can be chaotic for 10 minutes and then, all of a sudden, you look and they are working and you’re like, sweet!” |

Augustine, K., (2014). *Teacher mentors: Lived experiences mentoring at-risk middle school students*. (Doctoral dissertation). Escholarshare/drake.edu.(dd2014KAA.pdf).

**Kay’s Baker’s Dozen of Tidbits for Mentors**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. | Show that you authentically believe in the potential of all youth |
| 2. | Fear is real, and vicious |
| 3. | They can’t do what they don’t know  |
| 4. | Don’t do for students anything which they are able to do for themselves--but remember #3 |
| 5. | Listen into voice –listen with more than your ears  |
| 6. | Modeling speaks louder than words—and they will be watching you “like a hawk” |
| 7. | Highlight the small successes not only for your student(s) but for yourself and other mentors |
| 8. | Hold all student to high expectations |
| 9. | Know your biases and how to monitor if they are impacting your work with your student(s) |
| 10. | Respect and follow rules & policies |
| 11. | Teach your student(s) how to ask effective questions & probe more deeply |
| 12. | Don’t pass your stress on to your student(s) |
| 13. | Build an ethical learning community with your Coordinator & other mentors—practice “carefrontation”© Augustine 2012 |

**Planning for Intentional Meetings with your Mentee**

* **OPENER**—the first minutes can be uncomfortable for the student and/or the mentor—consider ways that you can make getting into a conversation low risk, for example:
	+ Have a fishbowl with slips of paper that the student can “draw”—each slip has a different question or topic that can start the conversation (ex. , Best thing that happened this week, what color would represent how you feel today, etc.)
	+ Use Story Cubes for the student to tell you the “story” of how their day/week is going
	+ Use erasable dice with trigger questions—the student can “roll the dice” and answer the question(s) that come up
* **CONTEXT**—the opener may or may not lead into the conversation you need to have—To create a context for your conversation:
	+ provide a brief explanation of why you want/need to talk about a specific issue or do a specific activity (ex., the semester is ending and we need to discuss where you are with your current course work and what you want to take next semester; today is the day we scheduled to review your quarter goals, etc.)
	+ Be aware that the opener may bring to light needs of the student that usurp your planned conversation.
	+ Stay flexible so the needs of the student drive your relationship while also keeping the focus on moving the student to successful engagement at school and with learning.
* **DIALOGUE**—Capacity-Building/Problem-Solving
	+ Use the 5-step (from manual) or STAR strategy to identify options and actions to address any issue, challenge or problem

(*STAR*=*S*top, *T*hink (choices, consequences, commitment), *A*ct, *R*eflect)

* + Use this time to help the student review and reflect on their monitoring data and goal-setting
* **CLOSER**—Watch to be sure you have time to purposefully close your time together. Create a tradition with your student for closing your time together, for ex., a high-five, a phrase or statement like “make your day a good one”, etc.

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