

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE

DAY TWO SESSIONS

Breakout Sessions #5 | Thursday, 10:00 – 11:10

Restorative Practices: Alternatives to Suspension

The limitations of traditional consequences leave schools feeling helpless because they only focus on deterring disruptive behavior rather than working to change the behavior. Educators are often finding themselves in a quandary when dealing with adverse behavior in school. With federal and state pushes to reduce and, in some cases, eliminate suspensions, schools are feeling helpless when it comes to ensuring they can maintain a safe and secure learning environment. During this session, participants will learn some specific Alternatives to Suspension that can be used in place of traditional consequences.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Johnson Great Room

***Kelvin Oliver, M.Ed.,** is an Educational Consultant specializing in Restorative Practices in Schools. As an assistant principal, he played an instrumental role in the development, implementation, and support of Restorative Practices. Mr. Oliver is credited for creating a Restorative Practices campus-based support model that included weekly professional development and an implementation support team. He has over 10 years of experience in public education as a special education teacher, classroom teacher, campus math specialist, district curriculum specialist, assistant principal and, most recently, principal.*

Just the Stats, Please

Sumner Elementary services 320 students in grades 1 through 4. There are 21 languages spoken, 86% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 101 students receive weekend food backpacks. This is year 3 of the Check & Connect program. The school has 5 C&C Mentors and 1 C&C Coordinator. Deborah Cook, C&C Coordinator, will provide evidence that supports increased attendance, decreased behaviors and increased course work. Sheila Berger, school principal, will provide an administrative behind-the-scenes look on how the program is funded as well as how staff roles are shifted to meet the needs of the students and their families.

Grade Level Relevance: Elementary | Location: Ski-U-Mah Room

***Deborah Cook** is a Check & Connect Mentor and Coordinator at Sumner Elementary School in Austin, MN. Ms. Cook has been in the educational field for thirty years. Prior to her three years as a C & C Mentor and Coordinator she taught grades three through six in Austin's Private and Public Schools Districts. Ms. Cook has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Winona State University. She earned a Master's degree in Educational Leadership from Southwest State University. Ms. Cook feels privileged to be working at the same elementary school she attended as a wide-eyed little girl.*

***Sheila Berger** has been an elementary principal at Sumner Elementary School for ten years and has 31 years of experience in elementary schools. Sumner is a grades 1-4 building serving ~300 students. The diverse student population has 20+ different family languages, with the majority of students speaking Spanish, Karen, Karenni, and dialects of Sudanese tribes. Eighty-six percent of the students qualify for Free Lunch.*

Check and Connect: The transition of Pinellas County Schools from a small grant in 2010 to sustainability and beyond in 2019

This presentation will explain how Florida's most densely populated metropolitan county went from implementing Check and Connect in four elementary schools to implementing it into every high school in Pinellas County. Participants will learn how the program was implemented in our district, the trials and tribulations experienced, and the steps we put in place to ensure sustainability. With 7 state certified trainers, our own on-line database, and the embedding of this intervention into our Bridging the Achievement Gap plan, participants will gain a better understanding of how Check and Connect can be sustained in other school districts.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Thomas Swain Room

Tari Connell, LCSW is the Managing Officer School Social Work in Pinellas County, Florida. She received her bachelor's degree from Eckerd College in 1995 and her master's degree from University of South Florida in 2005. She has worked for Pinellas County Schools since 2005 and became the Managing Officer in 2012. She became a State Certified Trainer for Check and Connect in 2013 after taking over as District Coordinator of the Check and Connect program.

Kris Moore, LCSW obtained her Masters of Social Work in 2011 from Minnesota State University, Mankato. She has worked as a school social worker for the past 7 years. Ms. Moore currently works as one of Pinellas County Schools' area attendance social workers, assisting 32 school administration teams on attendance processes. She was trained in the Check & Connect program in 2015 and became a State Certified Trainer in 2016.

Kelley Farrow, MSW is a School Social Worker in Pinellas County, Florida. She received her bachelor's degree from University of Alabama in 1996 and her master's degree from Florida State University in 1997. She has worked for Pinellas County Schools since 2009, most recently on the Social Work Attendance Team. She became the Co-Coordinator for the Check and Connect program in 2016 and became a state trainer in 2017.

Author Feature: Student Engagement Intervention Handbook

This session is focused on intervention programs and strategies from the recent Handbook of Student Engagement Interventions (Fredricks, Reschly, & Christenson, Editors) and forthcoming volume, Evidence-Based Practical Student Engagement Interventions: Promoting Students' Academic, Behavioral, Cognitive, and Affective Engagement at School (Reschly, Christenson, & Pohl, Editors).

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Minnesota Room

Dr. Amy Reschly is a professor of educational psychology and coordinator of the School Psychology Program at the University of Georgia. Her scholarly work focuses on student engagement, dropout prevention, and working with families to promote student success. She worked as a Check & Connect mentor from 1998-2000.

Dr. Sandra Christenson is the Birkmaier Professor of Educational Leadership and professor emeritus in school psychology at the University of Minnesota. Her scholarly work focuses on interventions that enhance engagement at school and with learning for marginalized students with and without disabilities. She has been a principal investigator on several federally-funded projects in the areas of dropout prevention and family-school partnerships, including Check & Connect. She actively serves as a C&C mentor in the Twin-Cities-Metro.

Breakout Sessions #6 | Thursday, 11:20 – 12:30

Impacting Engagement from the Inside Out

When we're triggered, it's hard to function adaptively. Dissonance can often undermine our best efforts and intentions. Trees provide a roadmap to understand conceptually what's happening internally, and help us "get to the root" of what's actually impacting us: clearing the way for higher-level productivity and application of skills. This can be the understanding some of you are looking for to help students and their families and colleagues get "unstuck." Reground, assess work habits, and elevate relational effectiveness. Participants will establish a basis for analyzing cognitive dissonance, where it limits greater self-efficacy, and give an adaptability protocol to produce positive results.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Johnson Great Room

Marius Massie is a national trainer for Check & Connect at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), University of Minnesota. Mr. Massie provides support and training to districts and community-based organizations implementing Check & Connect across the country. He is passionate about using systems to improve relationships and culture. Prior to working at ICI, Mr. Massie spent a number of years in professional development and youth development. He specializes in shifting negative mindsets, leveraging personal skills, and promoting healthy workforce culture—by scaling individual transformation from one person to many. His work to support adult social and emotional learning through trauma awareness, restorative practices, and personal leadership has propelled a more inclusive and equitable approach to teaching and discipline.

Enhancing Belonging in Minnesota Schools: A Cultural Liaison Panel

Programs that successfully engage diverse families recognize, respect, and address cultural and class differences. Studies confirming this finding have suggested the use of “cultural mediators” or “cultural brokers” who (a) are representative of the families’ cultures, (b) succeeded in the educational system themselves, and (c) can help families interpret and navigate the educational system. (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). This panel discussion explores the role of cultural liaisons in Moorhead Public Schools and their ability to promote a sense of belonging while working to increase student and family engagement.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Ski-U-Mah Room

Heather Keeler is an enrolled member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe of South Dakota with lineage to Eastern Shoshone Tribe from Wind River, WY. She currently works as one of the Moorhead Schools Native American Liaison serving grades 7-12, working in three buildings. The 2019-20 school year will be her third year in this position and seventh year in the school district. In this role she serves 8-10 Native American students through the Check and Connect program, along with providing cultural mentorship supports for all Native American students. Heather also serves on the Fargo Native American Commission and the Moorhead Human Rights Commission. She is attending Minnesota State University Moorhead pursuing her Master's in Education Leadership, set to graduate in Dec 2019.

Delores Gabbard is an enrolled member of the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation in Manitoba, Canada. She currently works in the Moorhead Area Public school district as a Native American Liaison serving students K-12 in five elementary schools. The 2019-2020 school year will be her third year in this position. She is a trained Check & Connect mentor and serves 8-10 students in conjunction with her Liaison duties. Delores's extensive cultural knowledge presents a unique opportunity to mentor all Native American students on a culturally relevant level. She is an active member in the Native American community and has volunteered in various capacities.

Ann Romine (moderator) is a Check & Connect National Trainer that provides training nationally on the implementation of Check & Connect. As a national trainer, she assesses the needs of sites and customizes training to meet those needs. She thrives on building connections for students and families across schools and communities.

After-School Programs: Developing Confidence and Skills to Achieve Academic Success

This session reflects on middle school youth participant experiences in a Minnesota-based community services organization program called U Connect in 2017-2019. It is based on the Check & Connect framework and designed to facilitate cognitive, behavioral, and affective engagement with school and learning for academically at-risk middle school youth in a safe and nurturing environment. Utilizing the program logic model along with survey data, reflective conversations, and other data, we focus on reportable outcomes around youth behavioral and academic school engagement, attitudes towards school, personal values and beliefs, and how much family support for education they received at home.

Middle School | Location: Thomas Swain Room

Diana Yefanova is a Site Coordinator at the Department of Family Social Sciences, University of Minnesota, working with the U Connect program, a comprehensive positive youth development program for middle-school youth based on the Check & Connect framework with program enhancements from STEM education, nutrition education, and parent engagement. Diana earned her Ph.D. in Comparative International Development Education from the University of Minnesota and has served as a researcher, educational program evaluation specialist for nonprofits and learning organizations, study abroad adviser, and instructor for the past 15 years.

Julie Murphy, Community Kids Program Director with Keystone Community Services has over 35 years of experience in youth development leadership. Community Kids is an accredited 21st Century Community Learning Center that serves 150 students annually in grades K-10. She was previously employed with Children's Home Society of MN as the Program Coordinator of a licensed and accredited youth program. Julie has a B.A. degree in Elementary Education from the University of St. Thomas.

Engage SEI Preview: Online Administration Option for the Student Engagement Instrument

Check & Connect and technology partners ETI are developing Engage SEI, an online administration option for the Student Engagement Instrument. Conference attendees will have the opportunity to preview the Engage SEI. This tool will allow you to easily and efficiently gather information on internal factors of student engagement related to cognitive and affective engagement. ETI staff will participate in this session to showcase the digital SEI. This is a unique opportunity for you to participate in a session with the technology developers, who are eager to make sure the solution meets your needs.

Grade Level Relevance: 3 - 12 | Location: Minnesota Room

Eileen A. Klemm, Ph.D. Candidate, is the Check & Connect Program Director at the Institute on Community Integration. Currently, she manages the overall development and provision of training and technical assistance for Check & Connect implementation across the country and internationally. Ms. Klemm is the co-principal investigator on three sponsored projects which incorporate Check & Connect: two statewide projects in Minnesota and Florida and the new Systemic Support for Promoting Graduation project that will utilize the C&C App and an online version of the SEI across multiple states. Ms. Klemm is a Ph.D. candidate in evaluation studies at the University of Minnesota.

Ann Thompson, M.A., is the business development specialist for Check & Connect at the Institute on Community Integration (ICI), University of Minnesota. Ms. Thompson provides business and marketing support for Check & Connect, the Check & Connect App, and the Student Engagement Instrument. As a business development specialist, Ms. Thompson works with the entire Check & Connect team in strategic planning and meeting the needs of our Check & Connect community. Prior to working at the University of Minnesota, Ms. Thompson held sales leadership positions within the Pearson, Clinical Assessment division.

Educational Technology Innovations (ETI) leads the technical development of projects that span collegiate disciplines and was formed to create technical solutions for users of educational products created at the University of Minnesota, such as the Student Engagement Instrument (SEI). Together, ETI connects the deep knowledge that exists inside the college with people and organizations on the outside that need it most.

Breakout Sessions #7 | Thursday, 1:30 – 2:40

Supporting Students Using Universal Person-Centered Strategies that Promote Social and Emotional Skill Development

This presentation will introduce how person-centered strategies can be integrated into school-wide and classroom management systems. Attendees will learn about the history of person-centered practices including how universal strategies are being used to support students in special education as well as becoming a part of school-wide general education efforts to teach all children important social and emotional skills for success both in academics and as a path to become successful adults in today's society.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Johnson Great Room

***Rachel Freeman** is the Director of State Initiatives for the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Freeman has been actively involved in positive behavior support (PBS), statewide technical assistance systems for evidence-based practices, evaluation design and implementation, and person-centered practices for over 25 years. She conducts research and provides consultation and technical assistance at the state, regional, and local levels to teams implementing PBS and other practices within intellectual and developmental disability organizations, education, juvenile justice, and mental health systems. Dr. Freeman has served as both a full and ex-officio member of the board of directors for the Association for Positive Behavior Support for over ten years and as president for three years.*

Partnering with Immigrant Families, Parents of English Learners (ELs) and ELs with Disabilities

This session examines innovative strategies for partnering with immigrant families, parents of English Learners (ELs) and ELs with Disabilities for student success, and improved educational outcomes through building successful communication. This session will also explore how love might be used as a pedagogical tool and how to facilitate an inclusive classroom where every child belongs.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Ski-U-Mah Room

***Dr. Charity Funfe Tatah Mentan, Ph.D.,** is a Research Associate with the National Center for Education Outcomes (NCEO). She is currently developing materials on parental involvement in K-12 schools for teachers and immigrant families. Dr. Funfe Tatah Mentan is involved in developing online teacher training modules for accessibility of instruction and assessment. She holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, a Master's degree in Adult Education, another Master's in Education Policy and Administration, and an Executive Master of Public Affairs from the University of Minnesota. She is a Hubert H. Humphrey Fellow with a diploma in International Human Rights law from the Humphrey School of Public Affairs. She also holds a Master of Laws in Philosophies of Laws and Legal Perspectives from the University of Yaoundé 11, Cameroon. Dr. Funfe Tatah Mentan has been serving the underserved immigrant community as an Executive Director of Africa Network for Development Incorporated (ANDI), a non-profit organization she founded in 2005.*

AmeriCorps Promise Fellows: Increasing Engagement through the Power of Collaboration

Minnesota Alliance With Youth's AmeriCorps Promise Fellow program partners with schools and youth development organizations to support students in grades 6-12 most at risk of dropping out of school. Acting as bridges between school and community, Promise Fellows work with disengaged students to develop a plan tailored by their scores on the Student Engagement Instrument to keep them engaged in school and on-track for high school graduation. Drawing on a menu of activities from the National Dropout Prevention Center, the program provides both a research-based, data-driven framework, as well as the flexibility to meet the unique needs of schools, communities, and students.

Grade Level Relevance: Middle and High School | Location: Thomas Swain Room

Sarah France Ullmer, National Service Director, oversees program development, training and partnership support for the Alliance's AmeriCorps Promise Fellow and VISTA programs. Sarah joined the Alliance in 2011 and has a background in youth development and community organizing. Sarah has a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and Environmental Studies, with a Certificate of Environmental Education and holds a Master's Degree in Human Development.

Angela Nelson is an Associate Principal at White Bear Lake High School North Campus. She has been supervising Promise Fellows for the past five years and has helped the program grow from one Promise Fellow at North Campus to 10 Promise Fellows district wide. In addition to supervising Promise Fellows, Mrs. Nelson also facilitates multiple teams at North Campus, including the Student Assistance Team and Equity and Achievement Team.

Check & Connect Implementation Network Onboarding

This is an informal introduction to the new online networking workspace for Check & Connect via Slack. If you want to connect with other C&C implementers and coordinators across the country, come introduce yourself and get acquainted with this online tool to help channel resources, tools, and state-wide collaborations.

Grade Level Relevance: K-12 | Location: Minnesota Room

Ann Romine is a Check & Connect National Trainer that provides training nationally on the implementation of Check & Connect for schools and community-based organizations. She also provides mentor training and follow-up training around fidelity and implementation for sites already implementing Check & Connect. As a national trainer, she assesses the needs of sites and customizes training to meet those needs. She is driven to build connections for students and families across schools and communities.