The Power of Relationship: How Mentorship Can Support Chronically Absent Homeless Students

Webinar Questions and Answers

QUESTION	ANSWER
Who enters the Check & Connect data?	Joe: Mentors enter the data, whether they are using paper/pencil forms, electronic files, or the C&C App. Sarah: For Spokane Public Schools our McKinney-Vento Specialists take the data from our Early Warning System and enter it into our Outcome Form (one specialist does this with paper and pencil, the other uses electronic forms). They try to do this with the student so that they can learn to monitor their own ABC's.
School Social Workers are trained in systems theory which focus on engaging the family - among other systems of support. Our schools are expecting teachers to be social workers. What are your thoughts about the lack of school social workers in schools today?	Joe: School social workers are often critical members when implementing Check & Connect. Their perspective and training support the concept, as you said, of engaging the family. However, not all school systems are fortunate to have school social workers on staff. I'm hopeful that more schools will start to see the value of having school social workers as a necessary component of any school. Sarah: I wish that more social workers were in schools! It is a valuable profession that provides so much; and is different than teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, counselors, etc. However, funding typically does not include this work. For our MV program, we have two MSWs, our intake person has a liberal arts degree and a library degree, and another staff member has a degree in liberal arts.
I am wondering what is different with this Check and Connect and PBIS check and connect. Thanks.	Joe: There is only one Check & Connect. In schools that implement PBIS, Check & Connect might be one of the interventions that is offered. However, you do not have to be implementing PBIS to use Check & Connect. Check-in/Check-out is another PBIS intervention and is sometimes confused with Check & Connect due to their similar names.
For Check and Connect -- if mentors do not provide academic-based tutoring, what do you use to show that C&C intervention is helping to the improve academic performance of students?	Joe: Mentors monitor the grades (course progress) of students to look for improvement in academic performance. Sarah: Our mentors are not typically doing academic-based tutoring. However, helping students attend to their grade, missing assignments, how to access built-in academic supports of the buildings, coaching students on how to connect/work with their teachers; are all key elements of improving academic performance and grades

Given that mentors are volunteers, how is mentor retention for C&C in Spokane?	Sarah: Our mentors are paid staff. Please see page 48 of the powerpoint for details.
How much of the C&C takes place at school?	Joe: All of the components of C&C take place at school: building a trusting relationship with a mentor; mentors checking on data; mentors meeting with the students; and, mentors communicating with parents. Some implementations of C& might require mentors to do an off-site/home visit with some parents periodically, but this is not a requirement. Sarah: My estimation is that 90-95% of the work is done at school. We only do limited home visits. We do assist students in accessing community supports as needed, but this work is minimal (as the student is typically able/willing/wants to do this on their own).
How do you find out where the trainings take place in your state?	Joe: You can reach out to us at: http://checkandconnect.umn.edu/training_consultation/default.html You can also call us at 1- 866-434-0010 Sarah: Both our SEA and ESD have listserves for the training opportunities that they have. I also belong on a listserve hosted by C&C.
Can we access this recording later?	Yes, it will be posted on the SchoolHouse Connection website.
What factors do you consider when matching a mentor with a youth? What does that match process look like?	Joe: Every implementation site considers different factors when matching mentors and students. Often, the schedules of the mentor and the student are considered in order to determine a time when they can meet. Sometimes, sites consider if a student already has a positive relationship with an adult in the building. Also, some mentors are matched based on similar interests of the student. There is no one-way to match. We encourage sites to consider each mentor and each student individually as they make matches. Sarah: Because we have limited staff in our program, the mentors work with students at their assigned buildings. For those schools that have additional C&C mentors outside of our program, the mentor that is assigned is the one that typically already has a relationship with the student, has room on their caseload, or has some trait that is shared (i.e. Native American, previously experienced homelessness).
What did the graduation rate increase to?	Sarah: Spokane Public School's four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for 2017 was 76.3%. This is an increase of just over 15% from 2014.