

GEAR UP Parameters for Check & Connect Students

- ▶ Students cannot be served or mentored by another grant/organization.
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- ▶ GEAR UP is committed to providing Check & Connect services to students for at least two years.
- ▶ GEAR UP school specialists will meet with students 20 to 30 minutes each week either virtually or in-person during a time period that works best for the student. The goal is to not pull students out of core courses.
- ▶ The topic for each meeting will vary based on the whatever is keeping the student from being successful in school.

Steps to Identifying Students

Student identification will begin with the GEAR UP school specialist.

1. Students 10-30% absent of the school day.
2. Students with three or more behavior referrals, which will be reviewed by school specialist before mentoring.



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About GEAR UP: GEAR UP helps prepare middle and high school students for college through academic planning and preparation, professional learning activities for educators and college access information for students and parents.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded Oklahoma with state GEAR UP grants totaling \$20.5 million in August 1999, \$20.6 million in August 2005 and \$34.9 million in September 2011. The grants have been matched by more than \$48 million from state and partner resources. From 1999 to 2011, GEAR UP received more than \$45.6 million in federal funds. With the addition of the 2011 grant, Oklahoma's GEAR UP program will ultimately receive more than \$80.6 million in federal funds by 2018.



What is Check & Connect

Check & Connect is a model of ongoing, systematic intervention and support to promote students' engagement at school and with learning.

Each student participating in Check & Connect is assigned a mentor. Check & Connect mentors seek to build long-term, sustained relationships with participating students that will connect them with their school and help them make academic progress.

Key Features of Check & Connect

- ▶ **Preventive:** Check & Connect focuses on watching for signs of withdrawal and providing timely interventions to keep students engaged.
- ▶ **Builds capacity:** Check & Connect works with students to build new skills such as problem solving and goal setting.
- ▶ **Efficient and adaptable:** Check & Connect builds on existing programs, services and resources within the home, school and community.
- ▶ **Provides outreach:** Check & Connect creates long-term trusting connections between schools, youth and families.
- ▶ **Individualized:** Check & Connect uses a systematic and organized approach, focusing on the needs of each individual student.

Check & Connect works with students by...

- ▶ Building a persistent, positive and trusting relationship with students and their families
- ▶ Checking and tracking situations which may put a student at risk of failing classes or leaving school, such as excessive absences, behavior referrals and poor grades
- ▶ Connecting with students to find ways to address disengaged behaviors and help students re-connect to school and academics
- ▶ Teaching students skills aimed at improving academic success, such as problem solving and goal setting
- ▶ Facilitating home-school collaboration to ensure students' educational success

Grounded in Research

Check & Connect is a nationally-recognized program with proven success. 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 a strong evidence of positive effects on staying in school.

Check & Connect was developed through a partnership between the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration and Minneapolis Public Schools. Since its inception in 1990, Check & Connect has been studied and implemented with K-12 students with and without disabilities, in suburban and urban settings. Check & Connect is currently being implemented by schools and community organizations across the U.S. as well as abroad.

Checks and Balances



GEAR UP will work with each school district to create an advisory board to review the program's effectiveness.

The advisory board will meet in December/January to discuss concerns and celebrations.

An additional meeting will be held in May to discuss potential mentors* and budget needs for the 2020-21 school year for summer training and additional expenses.

**Only participants who attended Check & Connect are allowed to be mentors.*

