Offering students tangible, hands-on tools to attaining academic and behavior success can be a very important way to offer support. In the Thompson School District, the Check and Connect program is one way that these tangible supports are offered. Implementing this program has led to great improvements in reducing truancy in the district.

Check and Connect works to build mutual trust and open communication which is developed through a long-term commitment focused on student success. The program has four components: enhancing family-school communication and home support for learning, systematic monitoring, individualized intervention, and mentoring. A focus is placed on problem solving and resolving conflict constructively.

In Thompson, Check and Connect has been targeting students in grades 6th-12th who are referred by staff as at risk for truancy or suspension/expulsion issues. Volunteer community members are trained and then paired with these students. Each volunteer obtains 2 student-mentees and meets with them in school once per week. Supervision from the district-level provides continuity and consistency for the program.

After only one year of implementation, the district reports that their students are showing increases in attendance and academic achievement. Equally as important, there have been increases in engagement from both students and families. The district discovered that there was no change in behavior due to the fact that the volunteer mentors did not feel comfortable problem solving with students in this area. To address this, further emphasis was placed on behavioral supports training. District staff hope to see gains in behavior next year.

Families are an important part of the Check and Connect program. Procedures to connect are targeted to both students and families. At the end of the school year, mentors, students, and their families are all invited to attend a potluck to discuss the year and give feedback, and also to celebrate success.