

Office of Education Equity

**Parents And Students Succeeding
PASS Program-Integration Specialists**

**Integration Specialist Report
2010-2011**





Check & Connect

A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention

Check & Connect is a model of sustained intervention for promoting students' engagement with school and learning. Demonstrated outcomes of Check & Connect implementation include:

- decrease in truancy,
- decrease in dropout rates,
- increase in accrual of credits,
- increase in school completion, and
- impact on literacy.

The Check & Connect model originated from a partnership of researchers, practitioners, parents, and students led by the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota.

Check & Connect focuses on building protective factors by promoting resiliency through a mentoring-type approach, competency through a cognitive-behavioral approach, and home-school collaboration through family-centered practices.

Check & Connect is one of 27 dropout prevention interventions reviewed by the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse to date, and the only one found to have positive effects for staying in school.

Check & Connect is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal—primarily attendance indices (absences, tardies,

or skipping class)—in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems.

Check & Connect is implemented by a person referred to as a mentor. The person is a cross between a mentor, an advocate, and a service coordinator whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students and their teachers and family members. The mentor works with a caseload of students and families over time (for at least two years) and follows them from program to program and school to school.

Check & Connect is structured to maximize personal contact and opportunities to build trusting relationships. Student levels of engagement (such as attendance, grades, and suspensions) are “checked” regularly and used to guide the mentors' efforts to increase and maintain students' “connection” with school.

The Four Components of Check & Connect

1. A mentor who keeps education salient for students
2. Systematic monitoring (the “check” component)
3. Timely and individualized intervention (the “connect” component)
4. Enhancing home-school communication and home support for learning

INSTITUTE ON COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
University Center for Excellence in Disabilities

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
+ HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

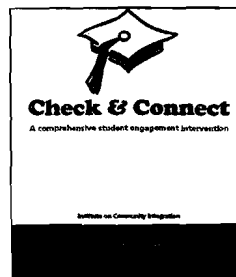
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The Core Elements of Check & Connect

- Relationship Building—mutual trust and open communication, nurtured through long-term commitment focused on students' educational success.
- Routine Monitoring of Alterable Predictors—systematic check of warning signs of withdrawal (attendance, grades, suspensions) using data readily available to school personnel.
- Individualized and Timely Interventions—support tailored to individual student needs, based on level of engagement with school, associated influences of home and school, and the leveraging of local resources.
- Long-term Commitment—committing to students and families for at least 2 years, including the ability to follow mobile youth from school to school.
- Persistence Plus—persistent source of academic motivation, continuity of familiarity with youth and family, and consistency in the message that “education is important for your future.”
- Affiliation with School and Learning—facilitate students' access to and active participation in school-related activities and events.
- Problem-solving and Capacity Building—promote the acquisition of skills to resolve conflicts constructively and to look for solutions—avoid the tendency to place blame and diminish potential to create dependency.

Check & Connect Implementation Steps

1. Determine indicators of students' disengagement
2. Identify students at risk of disengagement or dropout
3. Select/hire mentors
4. Use “check” procedures to monitor students
5. Organize existing resources for intervention
6. Implement “connect” procedures based on student needs as discerned in Step #4
7. Provide mentor support and supervision
8. Evaluate program implementation



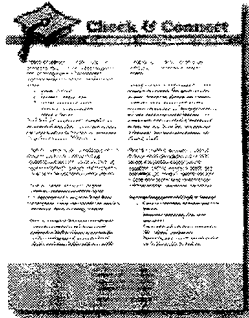
Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention Manual

By S. L. Christenson, M. L. Thurlow, M. Fox Sinclair, C. A. Lehr, C. M. Kaibel, A. L. Reschly, A. Mavis, and A. Pohl

The implementation manual for Check & Connect, a comprehensive, targeted intervention designed to enhance students' engagement at school and with learning through relationship building and problem solving. The 2008 edition of the manual, which expands and updates the original 1995 manual, outlines the key components of Check & Connect, describes the steps to implement this research-based model, and presents the theory underlying the intervention. (2008) • Cost: \$45.00 each (1-19 copies), \$40.00 each (20+ copies).

Check & Connect
Institute on Community Integration
University of Minnesota
150 Pillsbury Drive SE, 6 Pattee Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55455
866-434-0010 (toll-free) • 612-624-2097 (for local callers)
<http://checkandconnect.umn.edu> • checkandconnect@umn.edu
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

The Check & Connect Model



[Check & Connect flier \(PDF\)](#)

- [Introduction](#)
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- [Steps to implement](#)
- [The manual](#)
- [Training and technical assistance](#)
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Introduction

Check & Connect is a structured intervention that helps schools and organizations identify students who are at risk for dropping out of school, then pairs those students with mentors who address each student's individual needs to help them progress toward school completion.

Check & Connect is used with students as young as elementary school and as old as late high school. Each implementation of Check & Connect is tailored to the school or site where it is used, with the goal of making a long-term commitment to the students served. Participating sites purchase two days of initial training sessions to implement the program, as well as program materials to work with staff and students.

Demonstrated outcomes of Check & Connect implementation include:

- decrease in truancy,
- decrease in dropout rates,
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- increase in school completion, and
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Research-based

The Check & Connect model originated from a partnership of researchers, practitioners, parents, and students led by the Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota. The model is data-driven and grounded in research on resiliency and home-school collaboration. Student referral criteria include alterable warning signs of school withdrawal – primarily attendance indices (absences, tardies, or skipping class) – in the context of academic performance and emotional or behavioral problems.

Check & Connect focuses on building protective factors by promoting resiliency through a mentoring-type approach, competency through a cognitive-behavioral approach, and home-school collaboration through family-centered practices.

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How It Works

Check & Connect is implemented by a person referred to as a mentor. The person is a cross between a mentor, an advocate, and a service coordinator whose primary goal is to keep education a salient issue for disengaged students and their teachers and family members. The mentor works with a caseload of students and families over time (for at least two years) and follows them from program to program and school to school.

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Steps to Implement Check & Connect

1. Determine indicators of students' disengagement
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3. Select/hire mentors
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7. Provide mentor support and supervision
8. Evaluate program implementation

Training and Technical Assistance

Check & Connect trainers conduct training on the model and its implementation either in Minneapolis, Minnesota (see [Check & Connect Training](#)) or at your site, aligned to your needs, for teachers, administrators, counselors, parent liaisons, and others as invited (maximum 50 participants). This training provides participants with practical tools for helping students reconnect to school and get on track to graduation, and complements the Check & Connect manual, *Check & Connect: A Comprehensive Student Engagement Intervention* (2008).

Trainers can also be contracted to provide follow-up technical assistance to training participants. Each participant receives a copy of the new Check & Connect manual.

If you'd like to gain more information about Check & Connect training, to see if it meets your needs and the needs of your students, please answer some questions in our [Training Inquiry Form](#) or contact us at checkandconnect@umn.edu or toll-free at 866-434-0010.

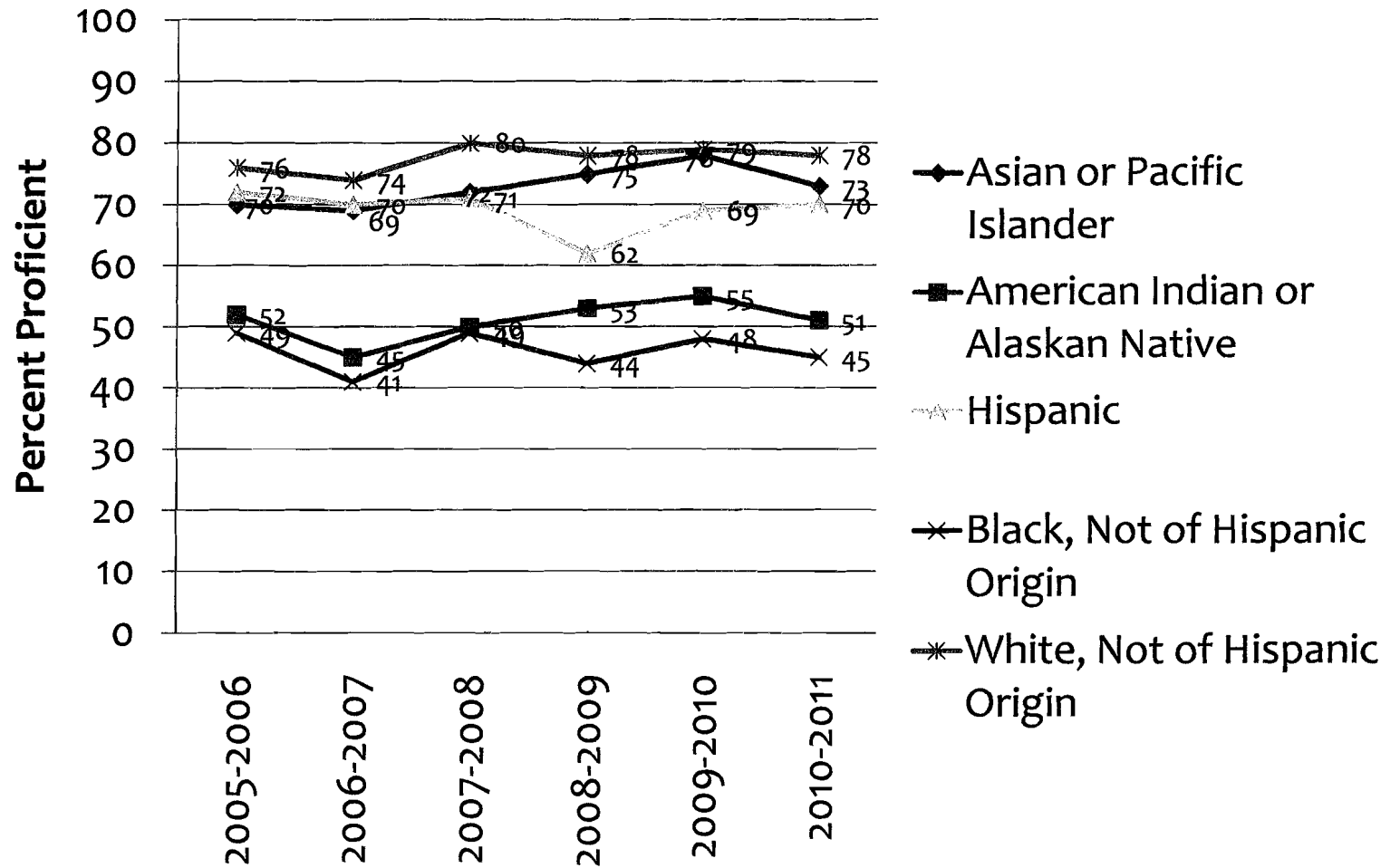
Demographic Information & MCA Results Duluth Public Schools 2010-2011

Tawnyea L. Lake, PhD
Director of Assessment,
Evaluation, and Performance

OEE Meeting – November 3, 2011

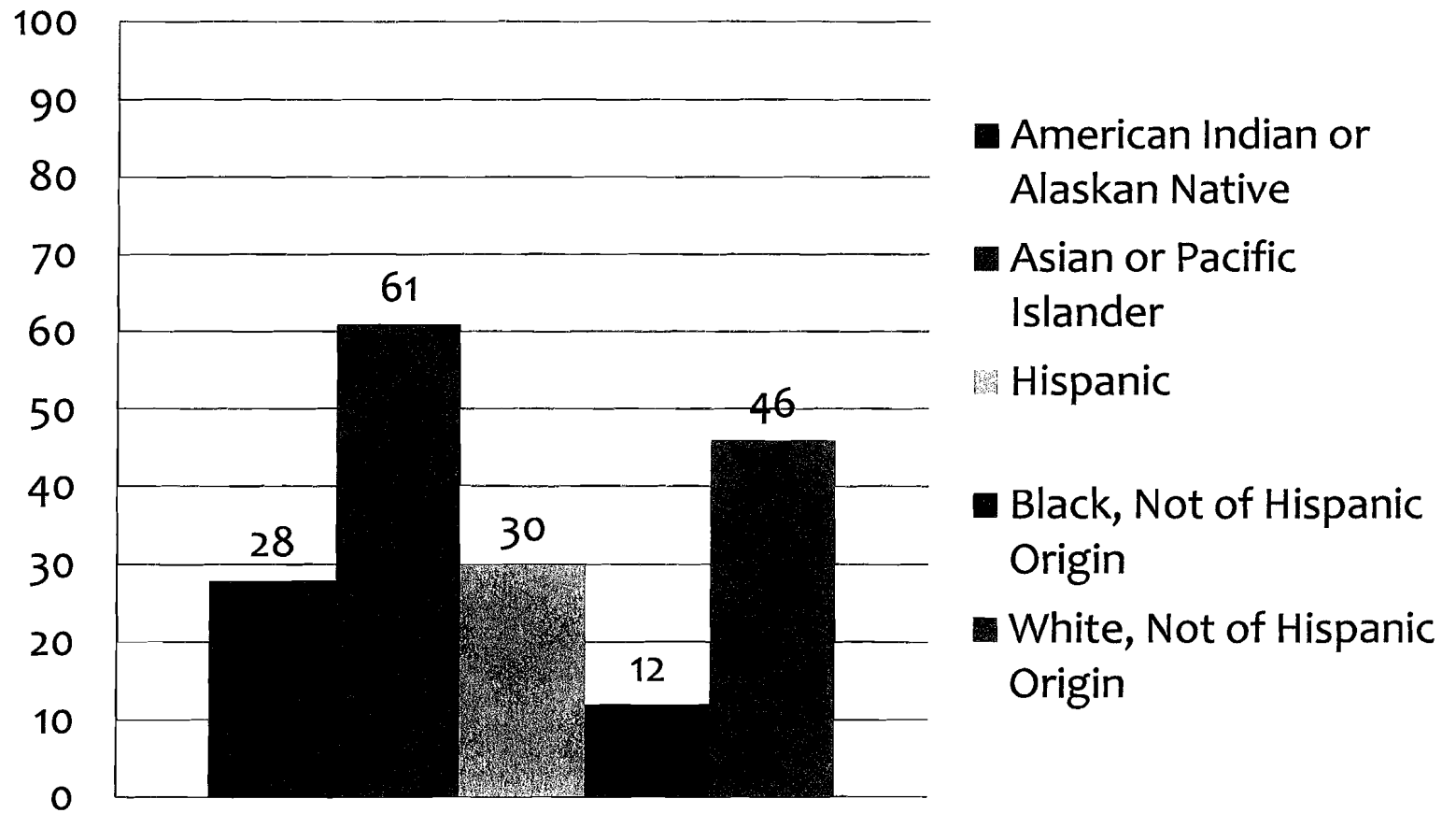
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MCA-II Reading Results By Ethnic Subgroup Over Time



MCA Math Results By Ethnic Subgroup

Percent Proficient




Attendance Rates Over Time By Ethnicity

Source: 2011 AYP Summary Sheet, MDE

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
American Indian/Alaskan Native	90.05	88.51	93.81	93.51	92.29	93.34
Asian/Pacific Islander	95.61	94.14	97.38	97.62	96.94	96.98
Hispanic	94.61	93.02	95.83	96.48	95.52	95.11
Black, not of Hispanic origin	92.21	89.63	94.78	94.57	94.18	94.17
White, not of Hispanic origin	95.11	93.60	96.89	96.79	96.07	95.87

Graduation Rates Over Time By Ethnicity

Source: 2011 AYP Summary Sheet, MDE



Ethnicity	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
American Indian/Alaskan Native	68.09	44.12	66.67	48.72	50.82	70.73
Asian/Pacific Islander	84.62	96.15	96.67	95.45	80.00	94.74
Hispanic	66.67	84.62	72.73	66.67	90.00	75.00
Black, not of Hispanic origin	60.00	72.41	68.18	59.18	63.27	58.82
White, not of Hispanic origin	86.39	86.79	89.07	89.01	86.94	92.67

Duluth Public Schools

Independent School District – 709

Dr. Keith Dixon, Superintendent

ISD 709 serves Duluth, Minnesota located along the southwest shore of Lake Superior.

Office of Education Equity

–Integration Revenue Plan –

Plan Year Three, 2011 – 2012

Budget Revision

Contact: Ron Hagland, MSW

Duluth Public Schools

215 N. First Avenue East

Duluth MN 55802

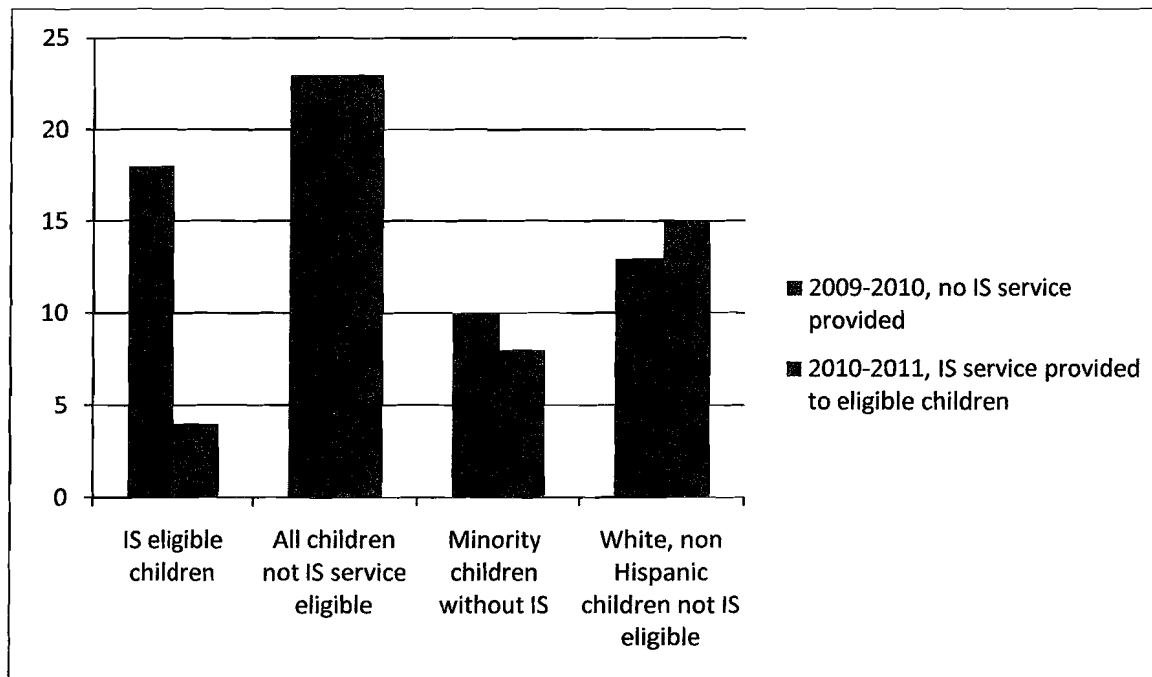
Ronald.Hagland@duluth.k12.mn.us

Dec. 3

The following additional support data reflects some of the first year impact of the Integration Specialist PASS program supported by Integration Funds. The data is encouraging and indicative of the potential of the PASS Program to contribute to the closure of the Achievement Gap.

Integration Specialist Attendance Data- Nettleton Elementary 1st Term, 2011

The samples started with Nettleton students who had 10 or more absences first semester in 2009-10 and in 2010-11. The list was narrowed to children who were students at Nettleton both years. This excludes 2009-10 fifth graders and 2010-11 kindergarteners, unless the student was retained. The remaining students were divided into three samples: children who qualify for Integration Specialist (IS) services; ethnic minority children who are not on the Integration Specialist service list; and white, non-Hispanic children who do not qualify. The purpose of the comparison is to determine the effectiveness of the IS to accomplish the first step of closing the achievement gap – getting students to school.



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Chart 1: Comparison of children with 10 or more absences first semester before Integration Specialist (IS) services and after (By Wendy Olson, MSW Candidate, March, 2011)

The number of students with 10 or more absences receiving Integration Specialist services dropped from 18 to 4, or 78%. There was no reduction in the number of students with 10 or more absences not receiving IS service. The number of students not receiving services can be further divided into two groups: minority students and white, non-Hispanic students. The number of minority students with 10 or more absences not receiving IS services dropped 20%. The number of white, non-Hispanic students with 10 or more absences who are not eligible for IS services increased 15%. For Nettleton Elementary, Integration Specialists have been successful in significantly reducing absenteeism of at risk children.

Wendy Olson, MSW Master's Thesis, University of Minnesota-Duluth, March, 2011

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**Office of Education Equity
PASS Program-Integration Specialists**

**Integration Specialist Feedback Report-Year One
2010-2011**

12/15

Integration Specialist Feedback Report-Year One 2010-2011

At the September 2011 Education Committee meeting of Duluth Public Schools School Board I was asked to recap the progress made by Integration Specialists throughout their first year of operation. My response could only be based on anecdotal information, both personal and reported. At that time much of the information provided suggested that overall the Integration Specialists were being successful in developing relationships with parents and assigned children who were students of ISD 709.

Integration Specialists spontaneously had reported a number of instances in which they felt resistance to their presence and efforts on a number of levels. They also had reported a high degree of acceptance and support by the communities of color whose members were to be the primary recipients of services provided by the Integration Specialists.

My clear impression following that meeting is that various members of the Education Committee had wanted statistical feedback that reflected specific outcomes as a result of Integration Specialist efforts. **At that time statistical data was not available.** Integration Specialists were polled to determine, from their point of view, what their successes have been. Each week the Integration Specialists are scheduled to have a staff meeting which was intended to be a PLC – Professional Learning Community, a meeting in which “best practices”, accomplishments, obstacles, and teambuilding would occur. Following the meeting with the Education Committee I attended their next meeting and I requested each individual Integration Specialist reports their respective accomplishments to me for inclusion in a report to be summarized and submitted to the Duluth School Board. The following feedback report is the culmination of their responses.

I've taken the liberty to combine like comments.

It is my hope that this subjective response by Integration Specialists will fuel thought, discussion and action by involved staff. It is also my hope that this report will serve to illuminate many of the dynamics Integration Specialists face daily. A statistical outcomes report will be developed and submitted as the data becomes available.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Hagland, MSW

Office of Education Equity

Accomplishments/Successes 2011

PASS-Parents and Students Succeeding Program-91 graduates District-wide from the PASS Parent Training Program Parent Relationship Building and Engagement:

1. Conducted Parents And Students Succeed (PASS) workshop and Graduated 24 PASS parents graduates.
2. Parents have expressed their knowledge of the P.A.S.S. program or know of a parent who attended.
3. Successful *Parents and Students Succeeding* (PASS) program.
4. Presented the PASS program at Stowe elementary school.
5. Co-facilitated Parents and Students Succeeding (PASS) Workshop and graduated 33 parents
6. The Pass programs and seeing the involvement of parents.
7. PASS was a great success for the parents and building great relationships.
8. Attending the graduations of the "PASS PARENTS" throughout the community.
9. Secured scholarship for students to attend grade level field trip.
10. Connected families with Title I SES opportunities (tutoring program options)
11. . Attending the graduation of one of my students, I know it took a team of us, but his mother thanked me and told me that their family couldn't have done it without the help of the Integration Specialists.
12. Good relationships developed with students and parents.
13. Increased students' attendance by providing alarm clocks.
14. Provided a translator for a parent during conference.
15. Students seeking her I-specs to discuss home problems.
16. With PTA support, enabled two families to celebrate thanksgiving (gift card to grocery store).
17. Provided a family with food supplies donation.
18. Helped a family to keep their housing.
19. . Successful Home visits.
20. Sat in with my parents in school conferences.
21. Helping parents feel comfortable meeting with school staff.
22. Alerted parents to attendance issues when they were unaware
23. Stayed in contact with parents about student progress
24. Attended parent teacher conferences when parents were unable to do so.
25. Getting families to conferences for the first time.
26. The building of relationships between some of my parents and students.
27. Communicated regularly with parents and guardians about their students' progress
28. Helped a family move to a safe home.

29. Trust and kindness being developed on many levels.
30. Several parents and staff have sought out the Integration Specialists to assist in working with their students.
31. At school open houses, parents have introduced themselves and shared their experience of hearing about a friend's child doing better in school because they had an Integration Specialist.

Staff Relationship Building:

32. Parents and teachers have approached Integration Specialists because the students have made connections with Integration Specialists that may have not always been made with personnel in the school.
33. I feel we are able to incorporate ourselves more into schools and build Trust and support.
34. Teachers welcoming our help and truly are happy to see us knowing that every student can use support and attention that we give them.
35. Coordinated home conference with teachers.
36. The Integration Specialists have made important connections and relationships with students and staff during the year.
37. The students and families that have been able to receive support through the Integration Specialist have been given hope that they are not alone. Hope that the issues and concerns they face are being heard and addressed. Hope that the district and those in charge with leadership in this community have heard their calls and are doing something about the issues and concerns that they face.
38. Connected parents with teachers in the classroom so parents became aware of what was going on in class/school from the actual teacher-rather than from me, or from the perspective of their student
39. Presented the program at staff meetings and conference regionally and state-wide.
40. Being involved in some of the decision making and being a help when help was needed.
41. Developed a good working relationship with schools' staff.
42. Helped to promote parents and community member engagement in helping students succeed in school.
43. Helped to promote community wide knowledge of the challenges for the students of color in the district and support from the community through the development of new programs and community accepting some responsibility for the successes and failures of our students.
44. Coordinated a meeting at school with parent and school principal to facilitate family problem solving.
45. Worked with teachers to arranged accommodations for students who were struggling, such as allowing more time to complete assignments, arranging for the student to take the test with me, and giving the students the same work but fewer problems to complete.
46. Having a teacher tell me that her student has started to "shine" with the help she was receiving.
47. With the solid relationships I developed with administration we were able to reduce suspensions and get parents to the readmits meeting sooner.

Student Relationship Building and Engagement:

48. Another teacher told me that she could see a significant change in a young male student "having more confidence".

49. A student asking “are you sure you are going to be at the middle school next year when I get there”?
50. Students have become expectant of seeing the Integration Specialists in schools and look for their support in school functions. Families have opened their doors and their hearts in sharing the difficulties they face being parents in this community. New experiences and tolerances have begun as many students who have not been directly in contact with diversity are able to meet and learn from different kinds of people.
51. Followed a series of interventions for student tardiness.
52. Determined that for some students tardiness was related to frustration with school work, and in many cases lack of organization.
53. Determined that a student tardiness was related to waking up late so I gave the student an alarm clock show them how to use them and demonstrated. I also developed a plan with the parent to set a reasonable bed time for the students.
54. Encouraging students to get better grades and watching it happen.
55. Walking students to school when their parent was unable to.
56. Helping students cope with trauma happening in their homes.
57. Providing alarm clocks for students having trouble getting to school on time.
58. Providing bus passes to students struggling with schedules.
59. Providing transportation for parents to attend school meetings and functions.
60. Taking graduation pictures of one of my students for his mother.
61. Many of my freshman students had great success at East and we worked on preparing them for what to expect for the upcoming year.
62. For ten weeks I took between 10-18 students to UMD to work with a Women’s’ Studies and Diversity class. The students were amazed how the myth of college being unobtainable is so powerful and that they do have the great opportunity to attend college and it is not just for white students.
63. At Central we tried a new attendance team approach with great success. Attendance improved by 40% in our target group.
64. Visited and checked in with students and teachers on a weekly basis
65. Assisted students with transportation to and from school (provided bus passes, taxi’s and rides)
66. Enrolled students at Boys & Girls club to get after school tutoring
67. Enrolled students to utilize tutoring services (Sylvan, Tutor Co, Abacus In-Home Tutoring, and Club Z).
68. Recruited college students tutors to service assigned students.
69. Improvement in attendance by my students.
70. Set up attendance contracts with students, parents, administrators and school staff
71. Enrolled students in afterschool programs
72. Assisted families in gaining access to district tutoring services.
73. Provided transportation assistance to parents to and from parent teacher conferences
74. Set up student transportation for bus
75. Assisted parents with school transfers

76. Alleviated problems between teacher and students by getting parents involved.
77. Provided resource referrals to families for school supplies, food shelves, clothing, and other help
78. Worked with several community organizations to bring resources to parents (Community Action, CAIR)
79. Delivered Christmas baskets to families
80. Provided referrals to parents for counseling and family counseling
81. Worked to connect families to emergency housing resources
82. Accompanied parent to difficult crisis intervention meetings
83. Facilitated improved communication between teachers and parents
84. Was able to get 32 hours of Sylvan Learning Center on Scholarship, for student which significantly raised his reading aptitude
85. With the help of co-workers, successfully recruited and placed at least 60 tutors in the schools to work with our caseloads
86. Built relationships with 5 tutor programs to help our students
87. Signed several students up with Mentor Duluth.
88. Enrolled two of my families in Summer Basketball / Academics Program to keep them engaged
89. Co-created and co-facilitated a 14 week program for middle school/high school girls to strengthen self esteem, provide life skills, and promote team work
90. Successfully taught the MLK "I Have A Dream" Speech to a third and fourth grader from our caseload, who then recited or read the speech at the DECC MLK Rally
91. Co-facilitated life skills program over the summer, taught life skills to 10-15 teens and pre-teens during the week
92. Increased Attendance for majority of students using previous school year as a standard of comparison
93. Established great, lasting relationships with families that I work with-built trust and confidence with the parents, families, and students
94. Connected families with various resources in the community such as mentor programs for their kids, mental health programs, adult education programs, community action programs such as Jump Start, food service programs, and any resources that the family wanted information about that would benefit the family, and in turn benefit the students
95. Help trained the parents to communicate and advocate for their children in school with teachers and staff in the schools
96. Got my parents involved in all the PASS program workshops that started last year
97. Got many of my students connected with after school/weekend programs offered through the school district or through the community
98. Connected families with culturally relevant events that support the cultural awareness of their students
99. Helped out at many cultural/community events that happened throughout the school year.
100. I saw behavior issues go down as the relationship with my students got stronger throughout the school year.
101. Through mentoring, I saw academic confidence in my students increase as the school year progressed. There were I thought many accomplishments and successes one just being the hiring of such a diverse group. Seeing some of my students turn things around and end the school year with higher GPA's then when they started.