

## **Focus on Check & Connect as a Means to Increase Graduation Rate**

### **LaBelle High School – Hendry County**

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LaBelle High School has had great success over the past two years with Check & Connect.

After the first year of implementation of Check & Connect the ESE Federal Graduation Rate for LaBelle High School went from 67% to 81% - Higher than the General Education Grad Rate!

One of many success stories shared was about a freshman student who missed 97 days and earned one credit. It was very clear this student was dealing with things no child should have to face and the school was worried that he was suicidal. They did not make much progress with him during his freshman year. However, the next year they began as a Check & Connect school and the student received a mentor. His mentor asked for district support and they started with art supplies and a donated iPod to try and make a connection with him. The staff rallied together to help provide understanding and support. The school was able to get him counseling and even helped with transportation to doctor visits. Once he started receiving some help, major changes began to take place. By his junior year he made a complete turnaround. His attendance improved tremendously and he was starting to self-advocate for things he needed. He made up all his credits and has the GPA required for graduation. Not only will he graduate on time next year, he has expressed an interest in taking an AP class. Words cannot describe the pride that his mentor feels from all his hard work.

LaBelle High School has 52 Mentees and 25 Mentors (Principals, Deans, Support Staff, and Teachers).

#### Check & Connect Activities:

- Football season Tailgate Celebration which was a great success
- Mentor meetings – Professional development sharing of what works
- Graduation Celebration – In 2014, 12 of 13 graduated, and in 2015, 9 of 9 graduated that were involved with Check & Connect