

# **Responsive Classroom Overview**

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**Presentation to  
School Committee  
March 23, 2010**



# **What is Responsive Classroom?**

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- An approach to teaching that emphasizes academic, social, and emotional growth in a strong, safe community to enable optimal student learning.**



# Basic Beliefs

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- ❑ **Academic learning happens best within a social context.**
- ❑ **Support for positive social skills is a foundation for the program.**
- ❑ **Community membership is an important component of the program.**



# **Responsive Classroom Approach**

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- Students learn best when they have both social-emotional and academic skills.**
- Responsive Classroom includes practices that specifically help students build social-emotional and academic competencies.**



# Guiding Principles

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- ❑ **The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.**
- ❑ **How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.**
- ❑ **The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.**



# Guiding Principles

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- **To be successful academically and socially, children need to learn and practice specific social skills:**
  - **Cooperation**
  - **Assertion**
  - **Responsibility**
  - **Empathy**
  - **Self-control**



# Guiding Principles

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- **Knowing the children we teach – individually, culturally, and developmentally – is as important as knowing the content we teach.**
- **Knowing the families of the children we teach is as important as knowing the children we teach.**



# Guiding Principles

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- **How we, the adults at school, work together is as important as our individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.**





# Learning Environment

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- ❑ **Student have time during the day to engage in active learning.**
- ❑ **The teacher and the environment provide opportunities for students to experiment, solve problems, and make fruitful mistakes.**



# Learning Environment

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- **Teachers use an inquiry approach, asking thoughtful, open-ended questions that stimulate and stretch children's thinking.**
- **Children make choices about learning each day.**



# Learning Environment

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- ❑ **Teachers pay careful attention to how children treat each other; they reinforce respect and caring as the basis for interaction.**
- ❑ **Children's ideas, creations, and discoveries are valued and displayed around the room.**



# Teaching Practices

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- ❑ **Morning Meeting**
- ❑ **Creating Rules**
- ❑ **Interactive Modeling**
- ❑ **Teacher Language**
- ❑ **Logical Consequences**



# Teaching Practices

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- ❑ **Guided Discovery**
- ❑ **Academic Choice**
- ❑ **Classroom Organization**
- ❑ **Working with Families**
- ❑ **Collaborative Problem-Solving**



# Outcomes

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- ❑ **Increased social skills and academic engagement**
- ❑ **Positive classroom climate**
- ❑ **Increased learner investment and independence**
- ❑ **Decreased disruptive behaviors**
- ❑ **More productive time on learning**



# Research Findings

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- ❑ **Students showed greater increases in reading and math scores.**
- ❑ **Teachers felt more effective and more positive about teaching.**
- ❑ **Students had better social skills.**



# Research Findings

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- ❑ **Students felt more positive about school.**
- ❑ **Teachers offered more high quality instruction.**
- ❑ **Teachers collaborated with each other more.**





# Implementation

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- **This Fall, 25 teachers in grades K-6 were trained in Responsive Classroom.**
- **30-hour training through Northeast Foundation for Children.**
- **Plans for training 25 more teachers this summer.**



# Implementation

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- ❑ **Morning meeting**
- ❑ **Teacher language: reminding, reinforcing**
- ❑ **Transitions**
- ❑ **Self-control, social skills**
- ❑ **Interactive modeling**



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**“The Responsive Classroom approach is one of the very best social-emotional learning efforts in America. This approach is grounded in the day-to-day, moment-to-moment lives of teachers and learners. It translates research and best practices into wonderfully practical, loving, and wise guidelines.”**

**JONATHAN COHEN, Adjunct Professor in Psychology and Education, Teachers College, Columbia University; Adjunct Professor in Education, School of Professional Studies, City University of New York**