

Responsive Classroom

4th Grade Classroom Model

Guiding Principles

- 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.
- To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
- 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 and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
- How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Classroom Practices

- **Morning Meeting** - gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
- **Rule Creation** - helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
- **Interactive Modeling** - teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
- **Positive Teacher Language** - using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
- **Logical Consequences** - responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity

Classroom Practices Cont.

- **Guided Discovery** - introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
- **Academic Choice** - increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
- **Classroom Organization** - setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
- **Working with Families** - creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
- **Collaborative Problem Solving** - using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

School-wide Practices

- **Aligning policies and procedures with *Responsive Classroom* philosophy** - making sure everything from the lunch routine to the discipline policy enhances the self-management skills that children are learning through the *Responsive Classroom* approach
- **Planning all-school activities to build a sense of community** - giving all of the school's children and staff opportunities to learn about and from each other through activities such as all-school meetings, cross-age recess or lunch, buddy classrooms, and cross-age book clubs
- **Welcoming families and the community as partners** - involving family and community members in the children's education by maintaining two-way communication, inviting parents and others to visit and volunteer, and offering family activities
- **Organizing the physical environment to set a tone of learning** - making sure, for example, that school-wide rules are posted prominently, displays emphasize student work, and all school spaces are welcoming, clean, and orderly

What does it look like

- Morning meetings, called the Circle of Power and Respect, that focus on strengthening relationships and improving social skills
- Collaboratively developing classroom rules and collaboratively resolving classroom conflicts through class meetings
- Applying logically related consequences to misbehavior, such as having students clean a surface they have defaced rather than simply being assigned a detention
- Providing opportunities for students exercise as much choice as possible in their academic learning throughout the regular school day.

Student Schedule

- 8:40-9:00 Morning meeting
- 9:00-9:50 – Cycle
- 9:50-10:50 – Math
- 10:50-12:00 – Lang. Arts
- 12:05 – 12:35 –Lunch
- 12:35-1:05 – Recess
- 1:05- 2:05 – Science / S. Studies
- 2:05- 2:50 – PE/Span
- 2:50-3:30 –Reading Instruction
- 3:30- 3:35 – Pack-up