



McAlister Intermediate School

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Dear McAlister Families,

Welcome to the the 2017-2018 school year! In one of the August McAlister Family Updates we included photos of our Responsive Classroom professional development that occurred in late June. You will undoubtedly hear more about Responsive Classroom tonight in your child's classroom. I also wanted to share additional information on Responsive Classroom, as it is having a very positive impact on our school community.

Responsive Classroom is framework for building community in our school and in our classrooms. The Responsive Classroom approach to teaching and learning fosters safe, challenging, and joyful classrooms and schools. The program was developed by classroom teachers and consists of practical strategies for bringing together social and academic learning throughout the school day. Some of the components of the Responsive Classroom that your child will come home speaking about include: Daily Morning Meeting, Daily Closing Circle, Signals for Quiet Attention, Creation of Hopes and Dreams and Classroom Rules, and Interactive Modeling

Ideally, the Responsive Classroom approach promotes a learning environment where teachers implement specific strategies to develop the classroom environment, and then we replicate many of those strategies throughout the building with other staff members. Teachers pay careful attention to how children treat each other and they reinforce respect and caring as the basis for interaction.

One underlying belief of the Responsive Classroom approach is that it is important to know children individually, culturally, and developmentally. When teachers take time to observe and understand the children, they can make decisions about curriculum, classroom organization, classroom management, and discipline that allow all children to reach their potential. Another underlying belief is that academic learning happens best within a positive social context; therefore, in the Responsive Classroom approach much attention is paid to helping children develop positive social skills. We also value responsible community membership and strive to balance the needs of the individual with the needs of the community. You can learn more about Responsive Classroom at www.responsiveclassroom.org. We are looking forward to a great year together; have a wonderful evening.

Sincerely,

Karen E. Carpenter-Snow