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### **Best Practices**

**1)** Whether you are an administrator, teacher, or specialist the Responsive Classroom approach is a best practice that should be implemented into any school setting. Our school is an RC school and the focus on students' social-emotional learning, behavior, and academics has been truly beneficial for both students and staff. It provides a positive and caring way to instruct and interact with students in a supportive and compassionate manner. Utilizing practices like Morning Meeting, greeting students, academic choice, teacher language, interactive modeling and learning, and logical consequences provide a consistent framework and approach for staff to utilize with our students. It allows for consistency in all areas of our school and creates an environment where students feel safe and comfortable taking academic risks and supporting one another in their learning. If we are not addressing students' social-emotional needs, then they will not be in place to learn. It doesn't matter how solid our curriculum, instruction, and assessments are, if students do not feel safe and ready to learn, then they will not learn. Responsive Classroom helps to foster an environment where students can thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally.

**2)** Trauma Sensitive/Informed Schools is another best practice that all school districts should be researching and implementing in the best interest of students. Teachers across the country are pouring significant amounts of effort into teaching crafted curriculums built upon evidence-based research methods and meeting growing state standard requirements. And yet, some students still fall behind, demonstrate disruptive behaviors, and remain disengaged. A new realization pointing to the negative effects of traumatic experiences on a child's learning experience is being examined as a likely answer to some of this phenomenon. Research shows that it does not matter how comprehensive the curriculum is, how engaging the learning is, or how effective an instructor someone is; if students do not feel physically and social-emotionally safe at school then they cannot learn. Childhood trauma is a common and pervasive

problem. School-based interventions are the ideal way to reach the vast majority of American children and thereby mitigate the impact of ACEs. This type of intervention helps to break down the negative effects of trauma by providing positive coping skills and adequate support to students and teachers. Current educational policy has helped to achieve some improvement of disruptive classroom behavior; however, a trauma-sensitive model will go further and empower students and staff to understand and take control of their responses to trauma. Utilizing a trauma-sensitive school approach has shown a decrease in behaviors, increase in academics, and increase in overall staff satisfaction at school. This approach assumes that all children coming into school have experienced or witness a traumatic event, and alters procedures, policies, and strategies to address this phenomenon. Discipline is adjusted in a way that it doesn't reactivate trauma or worsen effects of trauma. Classroom strategies are utilized that help adjust to the cognitive and emotional alterations trauma does to a developing brain.