



Responsive Classroom®

# What the Research Says

Two studies conducted by independent evaluators and aligned with the ESSA Tiers of Evidence

## 1 Responsive Classroom Efficacy Study

University of Virginia's Curry School of Education conducted a major research study which showed that the use of the *Responsive Classroom* approach is associated with higher academic achievement, improved teacher-student interactions, and higher quality instruction.

### QUICK LOOK:

- Three-year longitudinal study, 2008–2011
- Principal Investigator: Dr. Sara Rimm-Kaufman
- Funded by the U.S. Department of Education
- Involved 24 elementary schools in a large mid-Atlantic district
- Schools were assigned randomly to intervention and comparison groups
- Followed 350 teachers and over 2,900 students from grades three to five

For more information, visit [www.respondiveclassroom.org/about/research](http://www.respondiveclassroom.org/about/research) or [www.socialdevelopmentlab.org](http://www.socialdevelopmentlab.org)

### "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning"

In 2011, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) conducted a meta-analysis of 213 school-based, social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving 270,034 kindergarten through high school students. Compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance that reflected an 11-percentile-point gain in achievement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[www.casel.org/library](http://www.casel.org/library)

## 2 The Economic Value of Social and Emotional Learning

The Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, evaluated the economic benefits of social-emotional learning (SEL) by studying six interventions, including the *Responsive Classroom* approach. Researchers found that "improving SEL shows measurable benefits that exceed its costs, often by considerable amounts." Specifically, **for every dollar schools spent on *Responsive Classroom*, there was a return of almost nine dollars per student.**

### QUICK LOOK:

- Benefit-cost analysis of six SEL programs, 2015
- Research Team at Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education (Belfield et al.)
- Funded by NoVo Foundation
- Average cost for *Responsive Classroom* per student over three years, grades three to five: \$900
- Benefits, based on standardized gains in math and reading in grade five: \$8,920 or an almost 9:1 return on investment<sup>1</sup>
- Programs selected based on evidence of effectiveness, prominence in SEL field, and diversity of students served

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<sup>1</sup>Researchers have used Benefit-Cost Analysis since the 1960s to determine the rate of return on investments in education. This independent Benefit-Cost Analysis by Belfield et al. (2015) found immediate benefits to students during the three years of *Responsive Classroom* (RC) participation as well as post-RC estimated benefits accrued from high school to adulthood through lifetime earnings.

# Why does *Responsive Classroom* work?

## Our Theory of Change

We know from research and 35 years of educators' self-reports that when teachers consistently use the *Responsive Classroom* approach, behavior problems decrease and students' social and academic skills increase. We also know that teachers feel more efficacious and students feel more engaged in their learning.

But how exactly does this change take place?

Center for Responsive Schools, in collaboration with principal scientist Dr. Herb Turner, is in the process of studying this question and has developed the following theory of change to illustrate the likely impact of the *Responsive Classroom* approach on teacher beliefs and practices and student behavior and outcomes. This research agenda is consistent with the ESSA evidence guidelines.

