U.S. Department of Education
2019 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [ ] Title I   [ ] Charter   [ ] Magnet   [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Ben Lawalin
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Lincoln Trail Elementary School
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 13726 N. State Road 245
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

Lamar   IN   47550-7205
City   State   Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Spencer County

Telephone (812) 937-2400   Fax (812) 544-2930

Web site/URL   https://ltes.nspencer.k12.in.us/   E-mail   blawalin@nspencer.k12.in.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*Mr. Daniel Scherry
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)   E-mail dscherry@nspencer.k12.in.us

District Name North Spencer County School Corporation Tel.   (812) 937-2400
I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Mrs. Lori Gogel
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

_____Date_____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.

Part I – Eligibility Certification

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.

2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2019 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.

4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2013 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.

5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, or 2018.

6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.

7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2018-2019) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district   4 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
   (per district designation):   1 Middle/Junior high schools
                                        1 High schools
                                        0 K-12 schools

                                        6 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [ ] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban
   [X] Rural or small city/town

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2018 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	13	15	28
K	21	30	51
1	24	20	44
2	26	21	47
3	22	16	38
4	26	20	46
5	28	32	60
6	23	29	52
7	0	0	0
8	0	0	0
9	0	0	0
10	0	0	0
11	0	0	0
12 or higher	0	0	0
Total Students	183	183	366

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of   1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
   the school (if unknown, estimate):   1 % Asian
                                               1 % Black or African American
                                               0 % Hispanic or Latino
                                               0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
                                               97 % White
                                               0 % Two or more races
                                              100 % Total

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2017 – 2018 school year: 6%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain.

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	**Answer**
(1) Number of students who transferred *to* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	13
(2) Number of students who transferred *from* the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	6
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	19
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	307
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.06
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	6

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
                                                        2 Total number ELL

   Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):
   Spanish, Mandarin

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 22 %
           Total number students who qualify: 79

8. Students receiving special education services: __14__ %

   __53__ Total number of students served

   Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

_1_ Autism	_0_ Multiple Disabilities
_1_ Deafness	_0_ Orthopedic Impairment
_0_ Deaf-Blindness	_7_ Other Health Impaired
_3_ Developmental Delay	_21_ Specific Learning Disability
_1_ Emotional Disturbance	_36_ Speech or Language Impairment
_0_ Hearing Impairment	_0_ Traumatic Brain Injury
_1_ Intellectual Disability	_0_ Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: _8_

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	16
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	11
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1   _23:1_

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	97%	97%	98%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**
    Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2018.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.
    Yes _   No X

    If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

At Lincoln Trail, we hope to accomplish each and every day with our students: Inspire, Challenge, Achieve, Nurture. To this, we commit our resources.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

PART III – SUMMARY

Lincoln Trail Elementary is the largest of four elementary schools in the North Spencer County School Corporation. It serves about 400 students in grades preschool-grade 6. The school is located in the very small town of Lamar, Indiana and pulls most of its students from small, rural communities. For the most part, there is a high level of parental support. The school was built in 1993 and has been maintained very well. With the exception of technology, almost everything is still original. The office suite and hallways received new carpet and wall covering last summer.

Lincoln Trail has a history of being high performing. It has been named a 4-Star School by the Indiana Department of Education the past 4 years and 7 out of the last 8 years. To be named a four star school, you must score in the top 25% on the state mandated assessment. In addition, Lincoln Trail has received a letter grade of "A" by the Indiana Department of Education each year since school wide letter grades were first introduced.

Lincoln Trail Elementary is progressive and is always adapting to meet the needs of the students. As a result of it's high population of identified high ability students, they offer additional curriculum components. These include Math Bowl, Academic Bowl, Lego Robotics, and Vex IQ Robotics. Teachers have received training on differentiating instruction and allowing students to learn at their own pace. It is common for students to be working on classroom content one or two grades ahead.

The school has integrated technology into all classrooms. All students in grades 2-6 have their own google chromebook. Students in grades K-1 have their own iPads. Students attend technology at least once per week, where they learn everything from typing to computer science (coding). In addition, all classrooms have document cameras, projectors, and charging carts. Technology allows teachers to deliver instruction and check individual student progress more efficiently.

Lincoln Trail effectively communicates with parents in many ways. First, a newsletter is emailed out each week. The newsletter contains lots of important information about things happening in the school, student recognition, and opportunities for students to get involved in the community. Second, the website (ltes.nspencer.k12.in.us) is regularly updated and has links to websites used by both students and parents. You can also find Lincoln Trail Elementary on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Last, all teachers use the same platform to engage families. Bloomz is an award winning app that parents can join and connect instantly with their child's teacher. Teachers can send photos, videos, and messages to the entire class or privately to individual parents. The free app can be used by parents to communicate transportation changes, connect with other families at the school, and stay on top of their child's homework.

Mapping out a rigorous, challenging curriculum is a top priority for Lincoln Trail. Teachers meet twice a year in grade level teams with teachers from the other elementary schools to discuss content and map curriculum. Curriculum guides are renewed each year to ensure state standard alignment. In addition, teachers participate in weekly Study Groups to table grade student writing, check for vertical alignment, and professional development.

Lincoln Trail is very student centered. Student recognition is very important to the school climate. Students are recognized for academic accomplishments as well as for exhibiting positive character traits. Each nine week grading period ends with a celebration assembly where students receive praise and recognition for their hard work. Parents are personally by invited by teachers, making these assemblies very well attended. One student from each class is nominated for the prestigious "Lincoln Award," which is awarded to a student with the highest level of integrity and character. These students receive a special medal and get to eat lunch with staff on a designated day. Finally, students have several opportunities to develop leadership skills. Two students are elected from every class to serve on the Student Council. They lead fundraising/benefit efforts and work alongside school leadership to promote school safety.

Lincoln Trail is a safe place for kids. The school was one of the first to utilize a school safety app called "CrisisGo," which allows all staff members to access school safety plans digitally from their personal cell

phone. Access is also granted to local law enforcement and emergency personnel. Drills are practiced throughout the school year and ran through the app, ensuring reliability and familiarity. Anyone with the app can issue an alert for an intruder, fire, or sever weather threat. The digital plans include maps of both the interior and exterior of the school.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Our school has not formally adopted a reading/ELA textbook in over 10 years. Rather, our teacher have developed their own resource database they use to guide their instruction. This database includes components from several research based programs, including the Daily Five, must do/may do center work, and the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Program. Students participate in a 90 minute reading block each day. This time is generally broken into two parts: whole group, shared reading and small group, guided reading. Shared reading focuses on grade level instruction while guided reading groups students by academic performance. Teachers meet with each small group of students at least twice per week, delivering content at their instructional level. These groups are flexible and often change depending on the skill/strategy being taught.

An additional 15-20 minutes is allotted each day for some type of word study. In lower grades, this includes spelling and phonics instruction. K-2 classrooms also work in the phonics program "Words Their Way," which progresses students through the five stages of spelling development. Teachers of grades 3-6 spent most of this time explicitly teaching vocabulary.

1b. Mathematics:

We use a similar approach to mathematics instruction. Math class is typically 60-70 minutes long and is once again split between guided and shared components. The class begins with a 5 minute morning math routine, which is a daily sheet consisting of 5 review questions. This holds students accountable for content taught in previous lessons or in previous grades. Then, teachers move to a 15 minute mini lesson on the standard being taught. This is whole group, direct instruction. This is concluded with an exit ticket of some type, which allows the teacher to check for understanding and get a quick feel for who may need additional support. The students then transition into math centers for the guided part of the lesson. Centers include math fact practice, individual student practice, and problem solving. While students are working within math centers, teachers are free to meet with small groups to remediate or challenge learners.

Our school corporation has developed our own math fact program. We recognized the need for students to become proficient in math fact fluency. Teachers met in grade level teams to create common assessments that are given once per week, starting with the second semester of kindergarten. These assessments are grade level specific and assess the facts required by that grade's curriculum. Once students have passed these assessments three times, they move on to the next challenge. Students practice math facts daily, but test weekly. Since implementation, we have noticed a tremendous improvement in our students' ability or quickly recall math facts.

Finally, teachers in grades K-2 devote about 5-10 minutes each day to develop number sense. To accomplish this, classes participate in number sense routines such as counting around the circle, choral counting, and calendar time. These routines allow time for students to interact with numbers daily to help make connections and develop numeracy.

1c. Science:

Lincoln Trail uses three programs for science instruction. First, we utilize Discovery Science as our core program. This all in one digital techbook is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards and includes hands on labs and digital explorations. This aligns well with our needs and our chromebooks. All students in grades K-6 have their own account, although the classes in grades K & 1 are teacher led for obvious reasons.

Second, we subscribe to Mystery Science. This is an online platform that capitalizes on elementary student's

genuine curiosity. All "mysteries" are high interest, highly engaging and contain essential question sets, supplemental reading materials, and a hands on activity. The videos are intended to be viewed by the entire class with discussion to follow. Topics include biology, astronomy, and geology. The culminating hand-on activity allows students to find the answer to the mystery stated in the very start of the lesson.

Finally, we just implemented a new program called STEM Career Adventures. This is another online program designed to spark kids interest in STEM careers. Teachers are presented with a lesson plan and materials list (common household items). The students work in collaborative teams to create a solution to a real world problem. This leads the class into a whole group discussion about the career that is charged with solving these problems in the real world.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement

Social Studies looks very different in the primary classrooms than in the upper elementary grades. In the primary classrooms, the focus is on communities. Since we are a rural school, we partner with the high school's FFA (Future Farmers of America) to bring hands on lessons to students. The guest speakers work through our teachers to cover state standards and make learning more enjoyable. We also partner with local banks to teach students financial literacy, with the non-profit group Crisis Connection to teach students internet safety and with Junior Achievement who brings in community volunteers to teach citizenship and economics.

In the upper grades, we utilize a more traditional textbook to cover social studies content. We approach social studies instruction as non-fiction reading instruction. We try to use a lot of the reading comprehension strategies to get students to interact with text. Teachers discuss the importance of using text features and structures to make text easier to understand. Teachers use videos from the history channel and you tube to make history "come alive" and engage students. Finally, many of our standards are covered through field trips that teachers schedule throughout the year. For example, grade 5 learns about the American Revolution and colonial America. They take students to the George Rogers Clark Memorial in Vincennes each year for an American Revolution battle reenactment. President Lincoln grew up in the very county our school is located in, so we have both a state and national park dedicated in his honor. We take our students there for tours with local historians to ensure our students understand the significance of our history.

1e. For secondary schools:

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and four-year old students:

Lincoln Trail offers preschool for both 3 and 4 year olds. This is a self funded program that was started due to the needs of the community. The preschool curriculum focuses on skills such as fine and gross motor development, early literacy skills, social/emotional development, self-help skills, number recognition and counting, and oral language. Our preschool teachers work very closely with the kindergarten team to ensure kindergarten readiness. Kindergarten teachers served as consultants in creating the preschool progress report, which communicates kindergarten readiness to parents. Over the course of the past several years, our kindergarten teachers can identify the students who attended our preschool from the ones that did not. Both groups can and have been successful, but the learning curve in terms of school readiness is much greater for the students that did not attend our preschool.

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

All students at Lincoln Trail attend 5 different special area classes: art, music, technology, PE, and library. Students in grades 3-6 attend Technology class twice per week with an emphasis on computer science. Lincoln Trail recognizes that, for some students, these are their favorite classes during the school day. Our district has made it a point to maintain fully licensed teachers in these content areas. Each department contributes to the school's success by advancing the mission statement: Inspire Challenge Achieve Nurture.

Inspire: Classroom teachers take their classes to the library to check out books. This allows time for teacher recommendation and support. Students value this time because it is their time to select books of interest to them, rather than a teacher selecting material for them to read. We host a book fair twice a year for families to come in and purchase books. The proceeds from these are used to purchase books for classroom libraries.

Challenge: In an effort to boost our students' coding skills, we purchased a program titled "Code Combat." In the highly engaging game, students use code to create medieval characters that must protect their castle. Points are awarded based on missions, and our technology team has created a school-wide competition. Leaders are announced once a week in morning assembly.

Achieve: Physical education classes participate in creative "games." These include ping pong, archery, square dancing, and nitroball. Gone are the days of students just playing sports in class. Our teacher emphasizes being active and playing for enjoyment and takes the pressure off of winning and losing. Rather, students learn the importance of fitness and the health benefits of an active lifestyle. Students create fitness journals where they track progress on daily health initiatives, such as eating fruits and vegetables, doing sit ups or push ups, and counting steps.

Nurture: Art and music classes showcase our student's creativity. The art curriculum includes pottery/sculpting, painting and drawing. They study art history and read about famous artists. The year ends with an art show set up at our high school for families to see the projects the students have been working on. Students in music classes learn about rhythm, movement/dance, and how to read music. 5th graders learn how to play guitar, thanks to a grant our music teacher wrote. Students are also invited to participate in Choir, Circle the State with Song, and Band. The LT Choir performs each year at Christmas, during 6th grade Graduation, at Grandparent's/Veteran's Day, and at the annual Variety Show.

Students in grades 4-6 are eligible to participate in the annual Elementary Musical, put on by fine arts department from each of the four elementary schools in our district. This event has become a community favorite. Students from all four schools get to work together after school for to hours each day to put on several shows for the community. It is during these shows that the Art Fair is on display as well. It is our way of highlighting the work our students do in special area classes.

Finally, Lincoln Trail holds a school-wide Variety Show each year in February. Students may sign up to be in the show and get to take the stage to share their unique gifts and talents with the school. We have had everything from stand up comedy, musical performances on various instruments, and gymnastics. Whether your talent is singing or throwing footballs at a target, all are welcome to be in the show. The final act each year is the 6th grade class act, organized by the parents of the class. It is one of the final things the students will all do together before leaving for the middle school.

3. **Special Populations:**

Lincoln Trail Elementary practices the full inclusion model, which means we believe most students are best served in the general education setting. We do have a resource room for special education that is used for students who need that environment, which is only just 2 or 3 students. Most of our students identified as needing special education are served in the general classroom setting, thus sending the message that teachers are responsible for ALL students. Our special education teacher enters these general classrooms to team teach or work in small groups.

Students are referred to a school psychologist for an evaluation after going through the RTI process. RTI stands for Response to Intervention. RTI meetings are held once a month and are attended by the building principal, the special education teacher, the school psychologist, and the general education teacher. This team helps put interventions into place that support the student. Data is collected and monitored to gauge the effectiveness of the interventions. If the student is making progress, those interventions may stay in place and eventually the student will be released from RTI. If the student continues to struggle, parent permission is obtained and the student is referred to the school psychologist for an evaluation.

Lincoln Trail works hard to meet the needs of all of the students we serve. As mentioned previously, we have a large population of gifted students identified as High Ability. We screen for these students in grades kindergarten, second, and five. Students are placed in the high ability program after qualifying and with a parent signature. These students are then invited to participate in our robotics program, Math Bowl, and Academic Bowl. In addition, these students are challenged daily through advanced curriculum and pacing in the guided instruction portion of our classes.

Regardless of whether students have been identified as high ability or special needs, the emphasis is always on the growth of our students. All teachers have dashboards that essentially are a class list with all assessment data listed. Individual system to system (S2S) conferences are held between principal and teacher to monitor progress of every student.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. **School Climate/Culture:**

A positive school climate and culture at Lincoln Trail is considered key to growth and success for both students and staff. In regard to academic achievement, we recognize student excellence and growth quarterly with a school-wide celebration assembly. Parents of students receiving awards are notified and invited to attend. Once per quarter, a student from each classroom is nominated to receive the Lincoln award. This award is presented to a student who embodies the characteristics of Abraham Lincoln, including integrity, effort, and leadership. The Lincoln Award winners are also treated to a special luncheon in their honor. Each quarter, students who have not missed any homework assignments are rewarded with a special "Homework Heroes" activity, which may include extra recess or an organized game time. Lincoln Trail has a character education program that promotes positive character traits. Biweekly, a specific character trait is highlighted and a student from each classroom is recognized for showing that character trait during our school-wide morning assembly. Lincoln Trail staff are supported and encouraged in a multitude of ways. Our PTO plays a big role, which includes providing a yearly allotment for classroom expenses, putting funds toward items such as electronic whiteboards, touchscreen LCD displays, student chromebooks, and an assortment of treats and surprises during Teacher Appreciation Week. Staff is also treated to T.G.I.T on the 4th Thursday of each month with snacks in the teacher's lounge. Feedback is offered to teachers in both a constructive and appreciative manner. School wide celebrations occur each year when goals/accomplishments are met. These include being named a 4-Star School and receiving a letter grade of A by the Indiana Department of Education. Teachers are freed up from duties once each week for "Study Groups", where they can collaborate with each other and work on school or classroom initiatives.

2. **Engaging Families and Community:**

At Lincoln Trail all students and their families are supported and welcomed. There are numerous opportunities for families to be engaged. Students and families are welcomed every school year with an Open House that is held before school begins. At Lincoln Trail we believe it is important for all families to feel welcome to come, meet the teacher, and visit the school before the new school year begins. At Lincoln Trail we have several opportunities for parents to stay involved in their child's education. We have 2 evenings where teachers stay after school to hold Parent Teacher Conferences. Teachers are always available to meet with parents additional time to ensure the student's needs are being met and to inform parents of any concerns. Teachers at Lincoln Trail also have a Bloomz page where they communicate classroom information to parents. Through Bloomz, teachers can post classroom events, student success, and weekly academic updates. There are numerous opportunities for parents to be involved at school by being involved in the very active PTO. The PTO sponsors several events every year that allow parents to participate. Parents can participate in several activities, including Fall Party, Chili Supper, Race for Education, and Year End Field Day Celebration. Lincoln Trail is also used to support the community including hosting an American Red Cross Blood Drive, having Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts hold their meetings, and hosting sporting events after school hours. At Lincoln Trail we also have the Spencer County EMS spend a few days training the 6th grade students in CPR certification. Finally, Lincoln Trail is very active on social media, with accounts on Facebook, Twitter, and a webpage that is updated regularly.

3. **Professional Development:**

Professional development is critical to the success of any school. Since students are ever changing, so must teachers and education. Our school corporation requires some training of all teachers. This includes Ruby Payne poverty training, specific technology integration training, and Carolyn Coil differentiation. We offer a new teacher two day boot camp for these, as well as building specific items. Each building principal is expected to be the instructional leader, so the once a month faculty meetings are centered on improving instruction. The district also has once a week administrative leadership meetings, half of which is based on instruction. Principals watch video clips of teachers to evaluate and discuss pedagogical methods. Much

of what is discussed at the admin meetings is brought back to the building level with teachers.

All teachers also participate in weekly study groups for one hour during the school day. Teachers are freed up to eat lunch with one another and the principal. We have done book studies during this time. We table grade writing prompts. We map curriculum and align instructional strategies. These study groups are sometimes attended by the superintendent or other member of district leadership. This is also where all professional development of sate mandated testing occurs. Perhaps most importantly, this is where data from classroom assessments is reviewed. This common focus keeps student learning at the forefront of all we do.

Finally, we send teachers out to conferences if the conference focuses on something in our school improvement plan. These teachers are then expected to bring back the training locally and share with their colleagues. This is important because not only does it empower teachers, it provides an opportunity for them to network with other educators outside of our area. We recognize the importance of being open minded to new ideas and strategies to implement.

4. **School Leadership:**

The principal of the school is considered to be the instructional leader. This is an expectation handed down by the superintendent. As such, the principal of the school leads professional development of teachers, ensures the school is in compliance with all state and local mandates, and establishes the culture of the school. At Lincoln Trail, the culture is one of a laser like focus on academic growth of all students. Instructional time is protected as much as possible. Assemblies and other school wide events are held outside of the reading and math block. The principal meets with individual teachers at least three times per year to review student data and discuss instructional needs. Assets, including materials and then personnel, are allocated based on these conversations.

The principal and office staff also keep all community stakeholders informed. The success of students, classes, and the school in whole is communicated regularly through various means. Parents are acknowledged for the role they play in sharing their most precious treasures with the school. As a result, parents trust the school leadership to make decisions and genuinely know they are done so in the best interest of students.

The school's parent-teacher organization (PTO) is also very active in the school. They pay for all of the field trips, all school supplies for every student, and allotments to teachers to purchase items for their classrooms. The PTO conducts two fundraisers each year, one per semester of school. 100% of all proceeds goes right back into making the school the best it can be for the students we serve. Each time a fundraiser is held, the PTO communicates precisely what the money is being raised for. The PTO treats the entire staff to special luncheon during Teacher Appreciation Week. Parents, community members, and the principal cover classrooms so that the staff can eat together. Finally, the last Thursday of each month the PTO organizes a parent pitch in for food in the staff lounge. Little things like this help show the staff they are appreciated for their hard work in putting kids first. A staff that feels appreciated is a motivated staff.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The one practice I would identify has to be the emphasis on student growth and the use of individual teacher dashboards. The dashboard of your vehicle contains all the important information: your fuel, oil level, temperature, and odometer. Without knowing this information, you would be blind as to where you were going and how you would get there. The teacher dashboard operates in much the same way. Each dashboard is a spreadsheet that lists the names o the students along the left margin. Assessment data is then entered into the rows. Class passing percentages are then calculated and entered along the bottom.

There are two ways to look at data from these dashboards, and both are equally important. First, teachers can see how their class is improving from one round of testing to the next. Think beginning, middle and end. We should see students being "picked up" as the year progresses and meeting grade level expectations. Second, looking at individual student data to monitor for growth in this way. Some students may not meet the end of grade level target, but all students should progress and get a little closer than they were when they started. Teachers MUST use data from the assessments they give to inform their instruction. Each time a student takes a quiz, a test, or even raises their hand in class to answer a question, valuable information is being shared. It is imperative for the teacher to listen and act on this information.

The dashboards our teachers use contain the assessment data from the common assessments we use in our district. These include Dibels (reading fluency), SRI (reading comprehension), iREADY (formative assessment), and math fact fluency. The dashboards are all shared with the principal. For the principal, being able to see individual student data along with class percentages is invaluable. This helps guide conversations during meetings with teachers, parents, the superintendent, and even the school board. During the S2S meetings with teachers, it is so easy to get distracted and begin conversations about other things. the dashboards keep the conversations centered on what matter most: student achievement.