

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. Daniel Schmidt

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

Official School Name Lincoln Elementary School

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 1961 Sixth Street

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

White Bear Lake MN 55110-6899
City State Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County Ramsey County

Telephone (651) 653-2820

Fax (651) 653-2822

Web site/URL https://lincoln.isd624.org/

E-mail daniel.schmidt@isd624.org

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*Dr. Wayne Kazmierczak

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) E-mail wayne.kazmierczak@isd624.org

District Name White Bear Lake Area School District Tel. (651) 407-7563

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 Mr. Donald Mullin

(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 (per district designation):
- 9 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 - 2 Middle/Junior high schools
 - 3 High schools
 - 0 K-12 schools
- 14 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
 - 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	0	0	0
K	34	37	71
1	34	31	65
2	38	24	62
3	41	39	80
4	45	45	90
5	38	57	95
6	0	0	0
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	230	233	463

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

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 3 % Asian
 - 3 % Black or African American
 - 7 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 81 % White
 - 5 % 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: 3%

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 <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	3
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	9
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	12
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	469
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.03
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	3

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

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

Hmong, Somali, Spanish, Nepali, Russian, Igbo, Portuguese, Ukrainian, Vietnamese

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 17%
Total number students who qualify: 81

8. Students receiving special education services: 18 %
84 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.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>6</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>4</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>10</u> Developmental Delay | <u>7</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>7</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>53</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment | <u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>2</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 13
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.	20
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher, etc.	10
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	4
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	2

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	95%	92%	96%	96%	96%
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

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.

Ignite curiosity, inspire advocacy, and unlock potential through enriching minds, bodies and hearts, advancing integrity, courageous participation, honoring diverse perspectives, and serving as agents of local and global communities.

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 Elementary is located within the White Bear Lake Area School District. The district has approximately 63,000 people living within its borders. It's a second ring suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota and includes ten municipalities. The district is considered a bedroom community serving a 45 square-mile area centralized by the historic White Bear Lake. In 2009, the White Bear Lake Community hosted the Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener which highlighted the community throughout the state of Minnesota. The White Bear Lake Area School District is experiencing a change in student demographics allowing the opportunity for our district to be a leader in celebrating the diversity within our community. With 27% students of color and 57 different languages, our district has integrated various methods to assist families transitioning into our school system. Lincoln Elementary is a vibrant neighborhood school embedded close to downtown White Bear Lake with the beauty of three lakes close by. Originated in 1952, Lincoln is known for its active parent involvement, welcoming atmosphere and passion to partner with families as we prepare the whole child to reach their hopes and dreams. Although the demographic change within Lincoln's boundaries are occurring more slowly, the 18% students of color and nine different languages have provided the opportunity to become more proactive in welcoming families into our neighborhood community. Recently completing a comprehensive building strategic plan, our emphasis will focus on the social emotional well being of the child along with creating a connected culture within our community environment.

When entering Lincoln, visitors are greeted with a mural that reminds us to "Be Happy" immersed within butterflies and primary colors. Designed by a local artist, this mural was created in memory of a past Lincoln student who died battling leukemia. This student epitomizes the culture of Lincoln with the memory of her friendly smile and welcoming demeanor. It's an ideal daily reminder of why we are in this rewarding profession. Continuing into the office, families immediately notice the colorful walls and how the artwork represents books as buildings. It softens the feel of the space and provides great comfort to newly enrolled students. There is an effort to continue using art throughout the building in order for children to feel more connected to the school.

Lincoln is the home of two center based district education programs. The first is an Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD) special education program that accommodates K-5 children requiring Federal Setting II or III level of support. This program is amazing! The case manager and paraprofessionals have a unique gift of transforming children who were struggling in another setting to become self confident and gracious individuals who feel valued in this learning environment. The second district program is a School-within-a-School program for the highly gifted known as Explorations. Children in this environment are in grades 3, 4 or 5 and met certain criteria to qualify for this level of service. Many of the children left their neighborhood school to enroll in a program that not only provides additional academic challenge but supports students with their social emotional needs.

Overall, Lincoln School is known for its development of the whole child. Struggling learners will receive Tier II and Tier III intervention support before determining if special education services are required. Advance learners not in Explorations are clustered in general education classrooms receiving gifted accommodations due to the teacher's additional professional development training. Learning environments within the walls of the school are becoming more fluid and flexible with the removal of traditional desks. Due to the strength of our parent volunteer base, students have the opportunity to engage in an authentic theater experience and service learning opportunities throughout the year. With an emphasis of fitness and movement, classroom teachers are providing more structured and unstructured times throughout the day so students can move and become re-energized for learning.

Communication with parents has become more personalized through the use of SeeSaw in which K-5 students are able to record and upload short recordings of their day at school to their parent. Future initiatives include the establishment of an outdoor learning classroom that will have a dual role of environmental education during the school year and a sitting area for parents as their child participates in summer community education activities. Financially, we are at the mid point of our goal and are able to break ground the summer of 2019 if the design plans are in place. A second initiative is establishing more

long standing partnerships with downtown businesses. Currently, the practice is to visit more iconic landmarks like the fire station, police station, and library. With the potential of establishing business partnerships in downtown White Bear Lake, children's exposure to other career options will further develop their awareness regarding community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum:

1a. Reading/English language arts:

Literacy instructional practices center around a balanced literacy approach comprised of ten comprehensive program components in the areas of reading and writing. Using Benchmark Literacy as the core curriculum, the framework centers on guided reading and writing practices utilizing the Daily 5 and Cafe' format. Through whole group mini-lessons, small group instruction and personalized conferring practices, the classroom teacher is able to customize instruction through evidence collected by observations, running records and quarterly common interim assessments. Various classroom stations are set up exposing students with word work, creative writing, partner and independent reading strategies, Chromebook apps and tactile manipulatives. Beyond the station work, the teacher is strengthening the student's fluency, decoding and/or comprehension techniques in groups of four to six students for 20 minutes. During the 100 to 120 minute literacy block, students rotate through the classroom while the teacher provides guided small group instruction. Minnesota State Literature Standards are reviewed by building curriculum leaders through district level professional development sessions. These standards are shared with building instructional staff to develop a deeper understanding of their practices.

Grade level teams participate in weekly data driven discussions and display standards as learning targets within the classroom. Differentiation practices beyond core instruction are based on Response to Intervention strategies. Through the use of flexible grouping, a building wide schedule is created annually to provide consistent 25 minute grade level timeslots to refine literacy skills that are below, at or above grade level expectations. Grade level teams place more emphasis on the Tier 1 and Tier 2 student groups while the intervention and special education staff focus on Tier 3 student support. Regular education teachers create a Tier 2 action plan that highlights the specific students, standard and learning strategies implemented over a four to six week period of time. The intervention progress is monitored weekly and reviewed by the problem solving team.

1b. Mathematics:

Math instruction is based on the Math Expressions curriculum. Instruction beyond the curriculum is supplemented through guided math practices similar to guided reading. The 60 minute instructional block incorporates whole group mini-lessons, small group direct instruction and independent practice. The foundation of instruction stems from the Minnesota Academic Standards in Mathematics. The standards are reviewed and deciphered by the building curriculum leaders. Through a teach back model, building staff are introduced to the terminology and connect the standards to the curriculum. The teacher displays the daily learning target in the classroom. Teachers differentiate instruction by establishing three tiers of intervention. Building instructional support services are coordinated to provide 25 minute intervention blocks for each grade level. The classroom teacher is responsible for Tier I and Tier 2 intervention support encompassing students below, at and above grade level expectations. The intervention and special education teachers support the Tier 3 students.

Grouping is flexible, either by classroom, grade level or multi-grade level and are based on pre and post tests, quarterly common interim assessments and Measurement of Academic Progress results in grades 1 through 5. Communication of grade level classroom interventions are established through a Tier 2 action plan that indicates which students are being supported, the standard being addressed and the intervention used over a four to six week period. Daily monitoring of math skills occur through the students use of lap size white boards, Chromebook applications, a variety of manipulatives, peer collaboration and instructional dialogue. Beyond the basic emphasis of Number and Operations, Algebra, Geometry and Measurement, classroom teachers intentionally engage students in mathematical dialogue to gain a deeper understanding of math terminology and connecting what students learn to real world scenarios.

1c. Science:

Science instruction provides students with a hands on experience in the areas of engineering and the sciences of earth, physical, life, and scientific reasoning and technology. Based on the Full Option Science System curricula, FOSS establishes the materials and structure that closely align to the Minnesota Academic Standards in Science. For each area of science, grade level bands comprised of Kindergarten, Grades 1-2, Grades 3-4 and Grades 5-6, are responsible for specific modules that encompass the thinking processes of observing, comparing, organizing and communicating. Each student collects their observable evidence within each module through the use of a scientific journal. Evidence is recorded in a variety of methods such as drawing, text, charts, tables and labels. Engineering lessons for all K-5 students are supplemented beyond the FOSS curriculum. The curricular program Engineering is Elementary encourages students to use the Engineering Design Process to transition from determining what the problem is to initiating an idea that improves the outcome of the problem. This five step process is supported by 3M, an international engineering incorporation based near the White Bear Lake community. Emphasized within each unit are key vocabulary terms, connections to cultural literacy resources and reinforcing concepts through the use of learning videos, StudyJams website and Quizlet.

Students are able to demonstrate mastery of each engineering standard through identification, problem solving and application of their design model. Enhancing environmental awareness is also implemented within the science curriculum. Utilizing outdoor learning spaces, local nature centers and an annual Grade 5 three day field trip to Deep Portage Nature Reserve, near Hackensack, Minnesota, provides students additional hands on experiences that transfers concepts taught in the classroom to authentic experiences.

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

Social Studies is taught to all K-5 students using the online TCI curriculum Social Studies Alive! The program is based from the Minnesota Social Studies Standards. Each grade level has an identified program that builds upon concepts taught the previous year. Students who experience all six years of the elementary program begin their journey learning about themselves and their world, school and family, community, United States regions concluding with understanding America's past. Children experience an interactive approach that engages them in deeper collaborative dialogue with peers and collaborative activities while challenging their thinking as they consider perspectives beyond their own understanding and experiences.

Through journaling, students track their thoughts and opinions, ideas and methods of resolution addressing challenges pertinent to their surroundings and history. Assessment is through student dialogue and journal entries in the primary grades with project based assessments and summative assessment in the intermediate grades. Kindergarten through Grade 5 classrooms utilize the Junior Achievement program to help students understand basic business concepts through trained parent volunteers who teach a series of lessons emphasizing entrepreneurial skills, finance and community engagement. The Grade 4 unit concludes when students experience an all day field trip to Junior Achievement headquarters, located in St. Paul, Minnesota. Known as BizTown, students assume various roles within this controlled community, creating viable products, marketing their products and maintaining their business finances. Within the school setting, student council representatives set up and maintain a student school store. Having a practical enterprise within the walls of the school reinforces entrepreneurial strategies. Other optional building service learning events occur annually reinforcing civic responsibility. Examples include: the H2O for Life campaign which raises funds to provide water wells in Africa, Pennies for Patients which raises funds for students challenged by leukemia, food, toy and coat drives for local families in need along with an Angel Fund drive to help distressed families.

1e. For secondary schools:

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Visual Arts are supported through a community district partnership with The White Bear Center for the Arts. During each school year, six lessons are taught to all students in Kindergarten through Grade 5 by local artists highlighting the areas of watercolor, drawing and multicultural paper arts. Each year, five lessons focus on watercolor and drawing with the remaining lesson emphasizing world cultures. This year the following cultures are emphasized: Japanese Origami Houses, Central American Huipilies, Kente Cloth Paper Weaving, Tribal Masks, Kuna Animal Molas and Haida Animal Totems. Each theme is assigned to one of the K-5 grade levels. All multicultural lessons connect directly to the Social Studies Alive! curriculum. In addition to these six lessons, parent volunteers are trained through the Minneapolis Institute for the Arts to teach lessons back in all classrooms, further enriching the students experience in visual arts. Performing Arts are also offered through our Parent Teacher Association. For the past seven years, approximately 100-150 K-5 students volunteer to participate in the annual production. This year's production of Mary Poppins Jr. is directed and produced by parents with costuming, set design, choreography and supervision dependent on parent and staff volunteers. Technical support including lighting, wireless microphones, visual effects are the responsibility of the school district. Auditions for speaking and singing parts begin in late October with rehearsals beginning in early December. No child is turned away from participating in the production. Performance weekend typically occurs near the end of March with over 1500 parents and community members in attendance through three performances.

All K-5 students also experience general music instruction one of three school days in which students in Grades 1, 2, 4 and 5 perform annually for parents and family. In Grade 4, students are introduced to the recorder instrument while Grade 5 students learn to play the Ukelele. Grade 5 students also have the option to join orchestra. With approximately 40% of the students involved, lessons occur one of six school days along with ensemble every one of six school days.

Wellness and healthy lifestyle habits are the focus of physical education. All K-5 students experience physical education every one of three school days. During the school year, students will participate in units regarding soccer, basketball, bowling, hockey, gymnastics, volleyball, tennis, track and rock climbing. Students are bench marked early in the year completing certain fitness activities. Follow up bench marking is completed during the second semester to track overall individual progress.

The world language of Mandarin is provided to all K-5 students every one of three school days. Based on the model Total Proficiency Through Reading and Storytelling, the technique of TPRS provides students with an expanded view of their global perspective. In the elementary level, the intent of introducing a secondary language is to develop a more rich understanding of culture and customs versus mastery of the language. Media and technology are established within the learning environment as a resource for teachers and students. K-5 students have the option to develop their technology skills and share those skills back in the classroom by being a Tech Ninja. This role provides students with a weekly training on one particular skill that can support the teacher and other students in the classroom. In addition, the assigned innovation coach supports teachers as they introduce other tools to their environment such as Google Expedition kits, coding and Makerspace. The incorporation of technology and media in the classroom is based on integrating the 4 C's (Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking) within a teacher's daily instruction.

Character building education is taught to all K-5 students through the Second Step and Steps to Respect curricula. Throughout the year, students become more aware of characteristics of positive friendships, resolving conflict, recognizing and reporting bullying, taking responsibility and maintaining a safe caring respectful school community. This curriculum aligns seamlessly with our Responsive Classroom and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) training.

3. Special Populations:

Lincoln School embraces the importance of our special populations and strives to enhance the child's self esteem and academic success. Academic success is based on the child believing in themselves and in the importance of trying their best. Addressing a child's social and emotional needs is a critical first step

towards their academic success. For students with emotional regulation needs, Lincoln School's Emotional/Behavioral Disorder Resource room, School Psychologist office and Social Worker office allows for physical breaks, more adult support and quiet time for students to incorporate their self-regulation strategies. Sensory techniques available to help establish emotional regulation include: a floor trampoline, squeezing Playdough, hiding in a designed corner, rocking, headsets or listening to quiet background music. Once regulated, adults will continue to provide fidgets or other tools to transition the student into academic work. During instructional support, adaptations are implemented that allow for a higher probability of success. Reading aloud text, enlarging print, providing manipulatives, simplifying instructional steps, encouragement and adjusting work expectations all help build self esteem and develop a child's instructional skills.

Students with physical challenges are mainstreamed in classrooms with more square footage or with less students to provide the space required to move freely in the classroom. Paraprofessional support is present to allow for the development of independence while strategically supporting the child as needed. Autistic students are provided with visual cues to help them organize their thoughts and minimize anxiety during times of transitions. Color coding of various emotions also allow autistic students to recall the strategies required to de-escalate their elevated emotional state. Visually impaired students are trained how to use a white cane to transition more independently. General education students are educated on the purpose of the cane so a more tolerant environment is established. Braille is utilized to help develop the child's reading fluency with that particular language. In addition, read aloud books are scanned ahead of time so the child can use their computer to see and manipulate an enlarged version of the page. Students that consistently demonstrate mastery of the core subjects can possibly receive one of four gifted support levels. Level I is the differentiation provided by the teacher within their daily instruction. Level II is a pull out program in which qualified children receive enrichment once a week for 45 minutes in the area of math and/or reading. Level III is a gifted cluster model for students in grades 3, 4 or 5. At this level, one classroom teacher per grade level has received more intensive professional development regarding gifted instruction and adapts the curriculum to meet the needs of the small cluster of students. Level IV is a school within a school model, known as Explorations. Housed at Lincoln School, it provides district students in grades 3, 4 and 5, who meet criteria, a self contained highly gifted program incorporating strategies that balance rigor with a high level of inquiry based instruction. The program currently has two classrooms with enrollment increasing each of its four years. For school year 2019-2020, we are projected to add a third classroom.

PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

1. School Climate/Culture:

Ten years ago the Lincoln leadership team joined a cohort of other Minnesota schools through the Minnesota Department of Education emphasizing Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS). This philosophy is the foundation of Lincoln's climate program embracing the characteristics of inclusiveness, respect and positive interventions. This program motivates students through the distribution of pride tickets for demonstrating an act that made a positive difference in someone's life. Students receiving a pride ticket are recognized during school assemblies and have their picture on a classroom poster with other students. During the past two years, staff performed four skits per year to the entire student body acting out scenarios that they may encounter as students and provide strategies to use if placed in that situation.

Daily, adults make a sincere attempt to greet students in the hallways and ask how their day has started. Staff look for students who may be sad or had a rough start to the morning so immediate support can be provided. With this emphasis, it is not uncommon for students to greet staff and show excitement to share something personal or tell a staff member that a friend is having a bad start to the day. If misbehavior occurs, the school's theme of Above the Line provides every student with a fresh start and opportunity to make amends. The Above the Line theme is centered on the 3 R's (Respect, Responsible, Ready).

Academically, students are challenged through school wide events such as our annual Read-a-thon, Read Around Lincoln and Math Around Lincoln. The February Read-a-thon challenges students to meet a level of reading minutes in three weeks as a school. Over the past 11 years we have increased our total reading minutes goal from 125,000 minutes to 200,000 minutes. This past year students nearly read 300,000 minutes! If the goal is reached, the principal has to do something that tends to rally the students around a particular theme. Past examples include being turned into an ice cream sundae, singing in a rock band, participate against students in Olympic games and sleeping on the roof overnight during the winter. Read Around Lincoln and Math Around Lincoln provide students with a rotating passport experience throughout the building to listen to a guest reader and participate in a Math activity created by a staff member or guest of honor.

The needs and development of teachers are supported through the PTA and building staff. The PTA supports teachers through appreciation luncheons, classroom volunteers, funding for miscellaneous classroom costs and the coordination of book fairs to enhance classroom libraries. Staff support one another through social events, seasonal luncheons, support groups and personally checking in on the well being of colleagues. Weekly, the building staff receive a principal blog acknowledging staff successes or highlights along with building updates. Once a year, many parents, students and staff acknowledge a teacher through the Teacher of the Year nomination process and on National Teacher Appreciation Day.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Family engagement is a significant strength within the Lincoln learning environment. It's important that families become familiar with the staff as the school year begins. To support this need, parents experience a 25 minute welcome back conference with their child's teacher. In addition, each staff member creates a short recording of themselves using FlipGrid. A QR code is shared with families so they can link into the recordings when convenient for them. For students entering Kindergarten, their first day is delayed one day in order for parents and their child to experience the classroom one more time and communicate any final details before the start of school the next day. During the school year, the PTA and staff organize community events to help bring the Lincoln families together. In October, an event known as BOLT (Bring Our Learning Together) entices families to come to school in the evening to engage in Math and Literacy activities, receive a gift bag, eat a light dinner at a very reasonable cost, check out the book fair and watch students perform in a non competitive Lincoln Idol in which students sing and dance on stage for a 90 second segment censored by an adult ahead of time.

Later in October, the first of three service learning projects takes place after school. Approximately 200 K-5 students and their parents bring rakes and go to designated homes of the elderly or disabled and rake leaves from their yard. The other event provides blankets for infants of single parents and a craft bag for shut in senior citizens receiving delivered meals. The last event provides care packages to be delivered to residents of a nearby care center. Beyond the traditional conference events and music concerts, the PTA sponsors a night out for parents when approximately 200 parents and staff reconnect and raise money for the PTA to support the school replacing the traditional fall fundraiser. In January, the Art and Science Fair brings together over 130 K-5 students as they display a project and discuss it with visitors. In the Spring, events such as Grandparents Day, Grade 5 Graduation and the All School Track and Field Day are well attended by families. Lincoln is fortunate to have a steady volunteer base of parents, grandparents and community members that work with students on academic skills or mentor them due to challenging circumstances outside of school.

3. Professional Development:

Building a teacher's capacity to provide rich meaningful instruction within a nurturing and accepting learning environment is the most critical component of Lincoln's professional development program. To honor this pledge, Lincoln's journey has balanced the professional desires of staff with district initiatives. This partnership established a researched driven instructional action plan that provides teachers confidence in establishing positive and supportive learning communities, standards based instruction, best practice core instruction and enhances technology skills. Over the past 10 years, initiatives were implemented based on district, principal and/or teacher influence. Each year, the Lincoln leadership team participates in an August data retreat to review the previous year's data and create an action plan for the coming year. Each plan encompasses enhancement of core instruction and intervention strategies, building a culturally accepting climate, developing effective data driven team discussions while enhancing technology skills that are embedded within the instruction. Two action plans are created; one for literacy and one for math. Each action plan establishes SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time Oriented) goals that allow for accountability and progress monitoring. Within each plan, action steps are outlined to drive the professional development initiatives for the school year. During the school year, district leadership provides professional development to all classroom teachers focusing on standards based instruction and common interim assessments. Lincoln's site professional development plan reinforces the district initiative but also has the autonomy to supplement resources towards our own initiatives. Examples include trainings in PBIS, Responsive Classroom, Daily 5/Cafe', Number Talks, Thinking Maps, Google Level I certification and Collaborative Inquiry Team (CIT) implementation. The CIT concept establishes a four step process that guides grade level teams on standards review, best practice instruction, data analysis and reflection of instructional practice. Grade level teams meet twice a month to implement these steps and determine a course of action for the next month. Alternate weeks build on a teacher's instructional capacity in Literacy through professional development provided by the Literacy Coach. The building's leadership team reviews the August action plan mid year and in May to determine progress and possible adjustments to our original initiatives. Support is provided to teachers interested in piloting new concepts to determine if that idea is worthy of building implementation.

4. School Leadership:

The leadership structure at Lincoln is based on the concepts of empowerment, trust and dependability. The strength and passion that adults invest are for the betterment of the Lincoln community and enriching the child as a whole. Staff leadership is organized through an eight person leadership team. This group includes staff in other leadership roles such as a literacy coach, innovative coach, curriculum leaders, climate representative, internal strategic planning facilitator, staff development representative and principal. This team meets five times a year to monitor the building action plans, facilitate specific building events, provide feedback to the principal and guidance regarding professional development initiatives. Recent initiative examples include the incorporation of triad discussions to allow staff to become more familiar with other colleagues less seen. Also, this team is creating the means to have most staff Google Level 1 certified recognizing that the majority of our technical skills fall within that level.

each have a specific role regarding the function of the group. As a member of the PTA, the principal is an active partner with parents to determine if suggested ideas are beneficial for the majority of students. Together, over the past 13 years, various events have been started promoting a more inclusive community feel. Significant projects sponsored by the PTA include: enhanced playground, Smartboards installation, media furniture, classroom cameras, community based outings and the Lincoln theater. The next big project is establishing an outdoor learning center. Presently it is in the design phase with half the money raised to break ground this summer.

The role of the principal is one of instructional leader, facilitator and key stakeholder in bridging communication and building needs to the appropriate individual. Additional roles include providing encouragement to students, staff and parents while providing a clear vision on moving the learning environment forward successfully. The principal ensures that the checks and balances are implemented especially when centering around school improvement initiatives.

Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Empathy is the one practice that has been most instrumental in Lincoln's success. When individuals demonstrate empathy, the culture of the system shifts from trying to accommodate your own needs to accommodating the needs of others. In fact, that passion to help others becomes so strong that it is difficult to change course due to the insatiable appetite to complete the mission of meeting the needs of others. Even more incredible, is when there is a collective effort of empathy for a common cause. In a school system, that cause is the child and at Lincoln, there is such a strong sense of empathy that our staff and parents will do whatever it takes to meet the needs of each child.

For the past decade, nearly every decision centered around the needs of the children we serve. This desire became even more apparent during Lincoln's strategic planning sessions this past school year. A team of nearly 50 parents, staff and past Lincoln students collaborated over six months to develop action plans honoring the reason why we exist. Both big picture plans encapsulate the concept of empathy by nurturing the whole child through a personalized learning experience and creating a connected culture. Being able to see through the eyes of a child provides clarity to our professional existence. Investing in structural items such as a rock wall, new playground or interactive Smartboards is done because staff and parents desire children to have the tools to practice fitness and challenge themselves in a safe environment. As the Lincoln teachers make the systemic shift from having desks in the classroom to flexible seating, it is a statement of understanding that children learn more comfortably in a fluid environment that allows choice and accommodates for each child's physical and emotional needs.

The Lincoln staff understands and believes in the importance of personalized learning. Through that lens, teachers have shifted towards a model more heavily structured around small group instruction and individualized conferring sessions. Differentiation strategies have also shifted not only embracing intervention support for the struggling learner but also for the advanced learner who has already mastered the content. The success of the Lincoln community centers around empathy. It makes us unique and special to those we serve. It's because of empathy, that guest teachers and new families frequently state that this school feels different and is so friendly. It's because of empathy, that the Lincoln community exists.