



## Part I – Eligibility Certification

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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

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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):
- 6 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 1 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 1 High schools
  - 0 K-12 schools
- 8 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	39	73
1	44	28	72
2	33	44	77
3	39	37	76
4	45	36	81
5	38	48	86
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
<b>Total Students</b>	233	232	465

\*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):
- 2 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1 % Asian
  - 2 % Black or African American
  - 2 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 93 % 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: 5%

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.

<b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>	<b>Answer</b>
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	2
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2017 until the end of the 2017-2018 school year	20
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	22
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2017	480
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.05
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	5

6. English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 0%  
1 Total number ELL

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 28%  
Total number students who qualify: 130

8. Students receiving special education services: 20 %  
93 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>17</u> Autism                 | <u>1</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>2</u> Deafness                | <u>4</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>8</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>6</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>20</u> Specific Learning Disability         |
| <u>11</u> Emotional Disturbance  | <u>23</u> Speech or Language Impairment        |
| <u>0</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>1</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</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:

	<b>Number of Staff</b>
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.	40
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	19
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	5

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 24:1

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

<b>Required Information</b>	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015	2013-2014
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	96%	95%	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.

<b>Post-Secondary Status</b>	
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.

Lincoln Elementary School works as a team to ensure all students learn and grow.

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**

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Established in 1955, Lincoln Elementary School is home to approximately 470 kindergarten through fifth grade students. We are one of three large elementary schools and three smaller, satellite elementary schools in the Alexandria School District, which has about 4,000 students. Lincoln Elementary is located in the city of Alexandria, a micropolitan regional center of about 13,000 residents. The city has abundant industry and engineering opportunities which provides employment for many residents. Lincoln Elementary families are predominantly white, limiting ethnic or racial diversity. We have pockets of poverty and have a free lunch demographic, which over the past decade tended to hover just above or below the district average. Our families are mainly static, but we do experience some mobility, and draw some low incidence special education students due to special programming available as a larger, rural district. Our greatest challenge lies in differentiating for a truly heterogeneous student population. We educate students with significant cognitive challenges to students who are gifted and talented. We do not have a population of students which we program for large-scale, such as English Language Learners, but have small subgroups of students and students with disabilities. Given the wide range of learners in our classrooms, differentiation and personalization is often identified as the greatest challenge teachers face.

For decades, Lincoln Elementary School has had a community reputation for being a friendly and welcoming school. It is common to hear alumni, young and old, speak of the positive experience they had as a student at Lincoln Elementary. Likewise, it is typical for traveling staff, salespersons, and service people to remark on the warm, optimistic feeling within our building. This feeling is experienced within steps of entering, throughout our hallways, and in our offices and classrooms. Alongside the reputation for having a positive atmosphere, Lincoln Elementary has consistently demonstrated strong academic achievement. Since developing our mission statement in 2012, “We work as a team to ensure all students learn and grow”, we have reflected on our school practices which create a strong community perception, and what it means to teach the whole child. These key reflections and subsequent strategies have led to increased student and parent satisfaction, teacher efficacy, and ultimately high student achievement. In fact, 98% of families responding to our annual parent survey believe that teachers care about their children and treat them as individuals.

One of the biggest reflections and subsequent strategies is that core classroom teachers must own their students. Teachers commit to developing a trusting relationship with every student in the classroom, regardless of programming. During initial RTI exploration, we adopted an “every ed” philosophy. We believed we could not serve children in silos and the primary driver of student programming needed to be the core classroom teacher who develops a strong relationship with the student.

To support classroom teachers in their embracement of all students, Lincoln Elementary adopted a problem solving team model using a functional behavior assessment protocol. The problem solving team supports students by developing a plan to teach social, emotional, behavioral, or academic skills. The team develops a hypothesis, identifies target skills, and creates a plan which is progress monitored. We schedule follow-up team meetings to review progress-monitoring data and, if needed, make revisions. The plan focuses on student strengths and the process is highly student-centered. The behavior support team has become a robust and integral process in helping classroom teachers and teams meet student needs. This implementation has keenly contributed to a student-centered, problem solving culture at Lincoln Elementary School.

Another critical strategy at Lincoln Elementary is the implementation of our Code of Conduct Character Education Social Emotional Learning Framework. Classroom teachers deliver core instruction around social, emotional, and behavioral competencies. Students who need more support in these areas receive additional instruction in tiers two and three of our multi-tiered system of supports. We believe that focusing on developing these competencies in our students creates healthy, engaged learners. Behavior does not have a negative connotation in our teachers’ minds; rather they see behavior as something learned by students, much like reading and math.

Teaching to the whole child with an “every ed” philosophy does not stop with our students. Our teachers

accept families for who they are. At Lincoln Elementary, we believe we influence parents most by how we interact with their students. When we best meet the needs of the whole child, they are happier and achieve more. When students reflect this experience at home, families feel more connected, supported, and willing to partner with us. We acknowledge our influence happens within the school day and what happens at home often is beyond our circle of influence. We also acknowledge humbly, that despite a parent's skill set, they know their child best. We also accept unconditionally, regardless of circumstances, that parents love their children and want the best for them. These beliefs guide our parent interactions, from student-led conferences to a quick passing in the hallway. By nurturing deep, sincere student relationships and exemplifying steadfast acceptance of families, our Lincoln Elementary community is proudly thriving and sustaining a student- and family-centered culture with successful academic outcomes.



## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum:**

#### **1a. Reading/English language arts:**

At Lincoln Elementary, we use a Balanced Literacy Program which is a framework that gives equal attention to reading and writing instruction. Students see reading and writing modeled, share in the reading and writing with their teacher, are coached with individual conferring, practice independently, and are actively engaged in word study activities.

Our Balanced Literacy approach incorporates all reading methods, realizing students need to use multiple strategies to become proficient readers. We combine phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. This cultivates the skills of reading, writing, thinking, speaking, and listening for all students.

As a united team, we are grounded in research-based best practices. Throughout K-5, we support our students in the areas of literacy through interactive read-alouds, guided reading, language and literacy engagement, word walls to language walls, independent reading and writing, and classroom libraries. With adherence to the daily routine 150 Minutes of Literacy, students experience the structure needed to comfortably learn and thrive.

Utilizing Lucy Calkins Curriculum along with the Reading and Writing Project approach to instruction, we focus on a workshop model. We recognize that “one size fits all” does not match the realities of our classrooms and switch our thinking to differentiation and purposeful teaching that is individualized per student.

When you walk into a Lincoln Elementary classroom, you will observe instruction that is addressing each child’s individual learning style. Strategies are explicitly taught, not just for one day, but revisited when students need repetition and consistency. From small group work to conferring with opportunities for personalized instruction, student choice in reading materials are matched with level and interest.

The routines and structure of our reading and writing workshop are kept simple and predictable so our teachers can focus on the complex art of teaching in a responsive manner to accelerate achievement for all of our learners.

Being a multi-tiered systems of support school working diligently to provide quality education, we use assessments and progress monitoring to identify student concerns. With interventions such as Minnesota Reading Corps, LLI, PRESS for phonemic awareness and phonics, STAR testing, FAST assessments, and diagnostics to address student deficiencies, we pride ourselves in determining effective strategies to boost student performance. Helping our students achieve, advance and succeed is rewarding for our entire Lincoln Elementary community.

#### **1b. Mathematics:**

In the past, a stereotypical mathematics lesson would have the teacher lecturing students, and then have students working in workbooks. Lincoln Elementary has geared our lessons to the twenty-first century. Students experience a variety of lesson components. Mini-lessons cover core components quickly and effectively. Small groups raise student’s ability by allowing them to make productive mistakes with teacher support and scaffolding to get back on track. Number Talks allow students to converse freely with peers using tricky terminology to explain their thought processes. Station work, math game options, and math fluency practice, allow the students to experience doing math independently, and that it can be fun! Finally, Math Masters is a competition based enrichment program available to fifth grade mathematicians taught by a gifted and talented teacher.

Walking around in classrooms, math word walls, number lines, cardinal directions, clock pieces, and manipulatives grace the walls and shelves. During morning meeting, students share math in their world including personal anecdotes, calendar time, weather conversations, and scheduling. Mathematics is not a separate lesson in which to be taught at Lincoln Elementary. It is a core value strung throughout many lessons (not just mathematics) and celebrated as a part of daily life.

Our system of assessment and intervention ensures a framework to meet the needs of our diverse learners. Our Building Leadership Team (BLT) annually examines Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) proficiency data trends to establish building goals and ensure our core curriculum is aligned to state standards. We look at individual student MCA strand and growth data to develop individual student plans. We implement STAR Math diagnostic screening three times per year to identify students at-risk and requiring possible tier two intervention. PLC teams examine this data to develop and refine formal student learning goals. Classroom formative and summative assessment data is used to group students and provide leveled strategy group instruction. We also use AVMR (AdVantage Math Recovery) diagnostic screening to pinpoint exact numerical concept strengths and weakness, and provide students enrichment or support.

### **1c. Science:**

Lincoln Elementary School has a unique science program. A science specialist delivers standards-based instruction 90 minutes a week to all students in kindergarten through fifth grade. This cycle of instruction allows the teacher to scaffold instruction year to year, and provide a more intensive science experience. A district instructional coach supports the teacher in differentiated, standards-based science instruction.

Inquiry and problem solving are the foundation of most student learning. Key features include STEM challenges, manipulative Foss Kits, and field trips, including excursions to the Prairie Wetlands, the Groundwater Festival, and Carlos State Park. The third grade students even take an intergalactic trip to Space Camp. Dressed in their space helmets, they journey to learn about supernovas, stars and gravity in engaging activities put together by the district's ninth grade science students.

Community experts visit with students about STEM careers. One highlight is a medical doctor who came in to visit fifth graders and brought real, human organs that they were able to manipulate. This tied in perfectly with the standard for body systems. Another shining example is when local dentists came to visit students in first grade and talked about dental health.

Besides the end of the unit tests, science is also assessed in many other formats. Some units are assessed using project-based assessments. Fifth graders choose a science standard from their elementary experience to design a project or experiment. Part of this project includes creating a display board, which documents their learning. Students display and present these projects at the Fifth Grade Science Showcase. Other grades create microorganism posters, water cycle slideshows, and flip books to demonstrate their learning. Formative assessments are used to guide instruction to make sure all students are meeting the standards. Fifth grade students also take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in science. Science teachers review this data to determine strengths and standards requiring more emphasis.

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

Lincoln Elementary School has a strong social studies curriculum. Lincoln uses the Minnesota State standards as a base for developing our social studies curriculum. Social studies units have been developed by our teachers using the Understanding by Design method. Teachers base lessons on essential questions. This gets at the heart of inquiry-based learning and helps deepen the understanding of key standards. Lincoln also incorporates literacy activities into social studies. Using leveled literacy books and mentor texts goes one step farther in engaging the students. This facilitates deeper discussions and understandings of social studies standards.

Partnerships with our community enhance the social studies program at Lincoln Elementary School. Junior Achievement is a program which brings in community volunteers to teach real world lessons on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, government, and communities. Community resources are also used for

NBRS 2019

Veterans Day. Veterans share their experiences and what they have gone through for our country.

Lincoln Elementary recently renovated an area of our school into a “makerspace”. This makerspace provides hands-on, creative ways to encourage students to design, experiment, build, and invent as they deeply engage in social studies concepts. Third graders create their own globe using punch balls. Through group work, students figure out how to add lines of latitude and longitude and where to place oceans and continents. Activities like this combine geography, group cooperation skills, and math in a meaningful learning activity.

Students are assessed on social studies standards in a variety of ways. Our district has common and formative assessments for units. These are based off of our curriculum and state standards. Lincoln School uses the data from these assessments to guide our instruction. It is used to determine understanding of concepts. We also use assessments that allow students to show their learning in creative ways such as creating google slide shows, making posters, and presentations.

**1e. For secondary schools:**

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

**2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Lincoln Elementary’s other curriculum areas are referred to as special areas. These include art, physical education, media, and music. Each special area is taught by highly qualified teachers licensed in their specialty. All students attend special area classes. These classes allow for every student to find something outside of academics that they are passionate about, whether it’s arts, fitness, or technology.

The schedule for special areas is set on a six day cycle rotation. Kindergarten through fifth grade students attend music and physical education three times per cycle for 30 minutes per time. Art is taught once per cycle for 60 minutes to 1st through 5th grade. K-2 media is taught for 30 minutes once per cycle. 3rd graders receive media instruction for 60 minutes of media and technology where they work on typing skills, and 30 minutes of library including rating and comparing books. Students are also allowed to check out books during this time. 4th and 5th graders receive 60 minutes per cycle week working from the International Society for Technology in Education curriculum. Students are taught Digital Citizenship, being an empowered learner, evaluation websites for credibility, and being a computational thinker.

Lincoln Elementary follows a Code of Conduct which teaches students to be respectful, honest, kind, fair, and responsible. Special areas provide reinforcement of these skills as well as practice with transferring these skills to different environments. Participation in special areas builds characteristics of a well-rounded individual. Using the Growth Mindset philosophy, students learn persistence and grit as well as confidence and self-esteem. Students learn acceptance, patience, compassion, and kindness through engagement with students of all skill levels. Special areas provide students with an opportunity to acquire a lifelong appreciation for arts, technology, and movement.

Special areas at Lincoln Elementary allow students to explore a wide variety of life-long skills through opportunities in creating, performing, presenting, exploring, connecting, innovating, strengthening, and responding. These skills culminate in a diverse way. Lincoln displays a selected student Artist of the Month, highlighting their creative artistic achievement. Students perform public music concerts multiple times a year, presenting musical and ensemble ability. Student authors are displayed outside of the library, showing their creative writing. Lincoln students can challenge themselves on grant-funded Ninja Warrior equipment, allowing them to explore innovative ways to strengthen their bodies and minds. Special areas connect unique experiences to academic and life-long skills.

Lincoln special area teachers have written grants to fund various projects for further student engagement. These grants include technology, instruments, and Ninja Warrior equipment. The music curriculum contains an online component in which students can access and interact on personal devices. Grants have allowed the purchase of iPads and a classroom set of instruments to maximize hands-on learning, differentiation, and participation in the music room.

A grant was written for Ninja Warrior equipment to be used in physical education class. This equipment supplements the physical education curriculum and interests students because of the connection to the popular television show.

Lincoln special areas strive to connect learning to other curricular areas. Some examples include a unit on the science of sound taught in music and science, a unit on ancient Egypt in art and social studies, a unit on current events including the Olympics taught in physical education and social studies, and a unit on the Impressionist period taught in music and art. At the end of fifth grade, students participate in a cross curricular Special Area Showcase. The Showcase is a family attended evening to celebrate students' successes in special area classes. The classes included in the Showcase are Science, Music, Art, and Physical Education. Students present their Science Fair projects created for science class, students perform their musical program, students teach their parents an art project, and students show their fitness skills in a physical education activity. The showcase highlights skills that are not always represented on report cards or work brought home.

### **3. Special Populations:**

Lincoln Elementary meets the needs of special populations through implementing a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. Most students meet grade-level expectations due to our strong Tier 1 core instruction, in fact, many achieve above expectations. Lincoln teachers use guided reading and guided math to provide small group instruction at a student's academic level, including extending the curriculum for those who excel. Select students are also referred to the district's gifted and talented programs to provide further challenge.

Some students require additional assessment and intervention through Tier 2 and 3 to meet grade-level expectations. For instance, this school year a 2nd grade Lincoln Learner fell below the 40th percentile on the STAR Reading screener and received ratings of 2 (developing) for the Code of Conduct areas of Respect and Responsibility. Further diagnostic assessments were completed using curriculum based measures for reading (i.e. Formative Assessment System for Children--FAST) and behavioral rating scale (i.e. Social Academic Emotional Behavior Rating Scales--SAEBRS) resulting in targeting a phonics deficit and lack of skills related to self-control. Our Lincoln Learner was one of several students discussed at a Stakeholders meeting, when 2nd grade classroom teachers met with the School Intervention Team (SIT) to problem solve.

Reading Intervention began immediately for our Lincoln Learner with a Learning Resource Teacher using the research-based intervention PRESS (Pathways to Reading Excellence in School Sites) including ongoing progress monitoring of both the targeted phonics skill as well as grade-level text. Likewise, small-group behavioral skill instruction began through the at-risk Challenge Program with a school social worker using the Zones of Regulation. Our Lincoln Learner's progress toward self-control is currently monitored daily using Direct Behavior Ratings (DBR).

Data is reviewed every three weeks by SIT to determine if our Lincoln Learner is making adequate progress and should continue in the intervention, is not making adequate progress and needs further problem solving, or has met the target goal and is ready to be exited. This occurs across academic and social/emotional areas with input from administration, a school psychologist, interventionists, district-level coaches, and classroom teachers.

Our Lincoln Learner participates in "the Learning Lab," which is a space dedicated to Tier 2, Tier 3, and special education services. Students in need have access to multiple spaces with specific purposes, each named after geographical features: The "Prairie" has an open space concept with flexible seating and table spaces used for instruction; the "Valley Room" and the "Mountain Room" are partitioned rooms for student work and instruction, the "Ocean" is a sensory and behavioral instruction room, "The Cave" is a space used

for de-escalation (i.e. a small, safe and private place with supervision), and “The Nest” is a teacher-only collaboration space. Our Lincoln Learner has access to consistent support staff with various areas of expertise (i.e. academic, behavioral, speech, occupational therapy, social work, paraprofessionals). Relationship building is a key focus along with teaching skills and individualizing plans.

Our Lincoln Learner is part of the Lincoln Elementary Family, a team dedicated to meeting the needs of special populations using a tiered framework of support (MTSS). Every student gets what they need. We take a “fair is not equal” approach.

## PART V – SCHOOL SUPPORTS

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### 1. School Climate/Culture:

Commitment, safety, and academic excellence are at the forefront of Lincoln Elementary’s values. As our mission statement, “Working as a team to ensure all students learn and grow” and vision statement, “To be an extraordinary school district that tailors learning for each child by working together!” read, we strive to achieve academic excellence by collaborating with families and are accountable as a team by monitoring the progress of all students. Lincoln Elementary prides itself on its family-friendly, student-centered atmosphere and works diligently to create a dynamic learning environment through preparation, training, daily practices, and embracing change. In an effort to address the whole learner through best practice, Lincoln Elementary supports students through our school-wide Character Education curriculum focusing on respect, responsibility, kindness, fairness, and honesty and TCIT (Teacher-Child Interaction Training) of all staff members from classroom teachers to office personnel. Embedded in our daily practices, we also recognize positive behavior using school-wide Code Cash, as well as the weekly announcement of Lincoln Code Kids and mailing home Good News postcards.

In order to provide academic excellence, Lincoln Elementary is centered around core values focused around personalized learning, collaboration, and relationships which involve weekly collaboration through PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) which are driven by student data and classroom instruction. Professional development opportunities allow our staff to receive a deeper understanding in today’s educational forefront, most recently focusing on maximizing team potential using the 5 Voices training provided by GiANT Worldwide, as well as being a trauma informed staff through our daily interactions with students.

At Lincoln Elementary, we understand that a “one size fits all” approach is not effective for student achievement, engagement, or motivation. We provide an individualized approach, giving attention to each child and aligning our values with innovative concepts, while keeping student and community relationships at our forefront. Lincoln Elementary has a weekly Backpack program which provides non-perishable food to students in need provided by United Way. Families to Families, a program within Lincoln Elementary, is organized by staff and families. Families to Families supports Lincoln families with clothing, school supplies, holiday gifts, and community outreach programs through donations from staff and families. Our wellness policy embeds daily organics recycling in the lunchroom, a focus on Walking Wednesday, and healthy classroom snacks. With an emphasis on academics, student choice and activities, relationships, and attention to each student, Lincoln Elementary’s daily practices provide a reflection of a community of learners.

### 2. Engaging Families and Community:

Lincoln Elementary strives to foster partnerships between our students, teachers, and families within our school community and within the greater Alexandria community. Through daily interactions, relationships and connections have been established and remain at the forefront of each academic year. These partnerships are not stand alone. Many of our actions include connecting with local institutions in the Alexandria community such as with a local Kiwanis chapter to deepen responsible decision making, Thrivent Financial to provide holiday meals for families in need, and at a local nursing home which teaches students empathy and kindness. Relationships with outside agencies also develop within the walls of Lincoln Elementary through D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), Junior Achievement, and the Lunch Buddies program. Families and community members are often invited into the classrooms to showcase progress, from kindergarteners sharing an ornament festival with families to fifth graders sharing their knowledge of non-fiction, as well as special events for all grade levels in between.

Parents remain as a key component in building strong partnerships by maximizing student support and bringing more success through an entire team approach. This is echoed as our mission statement reads “Working as a team to ensure all students learn and grow.” Families benefit throughout the year from family game night, weekly food bags for families in need, and BoxTops for Education funds. An increased

level of family involvement creates a shared responsibility, leading to an increase in commitment, personalized learning, and academic excellence.

At the core of engaging families is communication with parents through the core classroom teacher, as well as special area teachers through phone calls and emails, texting and social networking, classroom newsletters, Good News postcards, and school-wide Code Kid announcements. Student successes and challenges are also shared through bi-yearly face-to-face goal setting conferences with parents and students. All partnerships remain accountable and help through this collaborative process to improve personalized learning for all students.

By promoting positive decision making and developing student success through family and community engagement, teaching the “whole child” remains an integral part of student success. Through these strong partnerships and consistent communication among students, teachers, families, and citizens within the Alexandria community, Lincoln Elementary is grounded in creating accountability where all aspects of students’ success are being influenced.

### **3. Professional Development:**

High quality professional development creates opportunities for Lincoln teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job-embedded contexts that relate new instructional strategies to teachers, their students and classrooms. By working collaboratively, we create communities that positively change the culture and instruction of an entire grade level and the school. “Collaboration” can be observed in numerous ways at Lincoln Elementary, both through small group and school-wide opportunities.

A main source of professional development is weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC). During this time, grade-levels examine standard-based learning and instructional practices to meet the needs of our students. Teachers implement planned lessons and record success and challenges while providing evidence of student learning. The team reviews the student level of understanding and reflects on the analysis of student work with potential modifications and instructional strategies. Meeting the individual needs of every student can be overwhelming, but one that is expected and passionately confronted. Our PLCs offer consistent support for teachers as they manage data and create learning levels with the intent to enhance positive student outcomes.

Another key professional development Lincoln Elementary uses are grade level meetings. Teachers make data-driven decisions to ensure students meet their set benchmark. Team action planning involves regularly assessing progress monitoring and curriculum data with anecdotal notes to analyze individual student progress. We review student grouping collaboratively to ensuring each student is achieving. Teams commit to a continuous improvement model of meeting regularly to share strategies, best practices, and to adjust student-learning goals.

In order to ensure our Lincoln team reaches and maintains its highest potential, we are committed to ongoing 5 Voices training, a professional development recognizing each individual’s “voice” in communication. No one voice matters more. Rather a “Nurturer” or “Guardian,” each staff member bring a specific set of skills to a team. Paraprofessionals and other certified staff also participate. Together we are able to achieve team dynamics valuing each member’s insights and contributions to work toward a common goal.

Another school-wide focus of professional development this year is becoming a trauma-informed school. Small group book studies are held before or after school to allow for time to discuss supporting students who have experienced traumatic events. Concepts are reinforced during principal lead and support staff lead trainings related to mental health and executive functioning. Lincoln teachers are able to have honest conversations together to brainstorm approaches to preventing and addressing interfering behaviors. There is a high level of trust established to be able to share perspectives and experiences.

High quality professional development is a key focus of Lincoln Elementary. We value the opportunity to

learn from one another and grow in our skill set to ensure our students are growing both academically and socially.

#### **4. School Leadership:**

Lincoln Elementary prides itself on its strong school leadership that has been at the core of the school for years. This leadership stems from the overarching philosophy of creating a family-friendly, student-centered atmosphere that strives to create strong relationships to ensure all students learn and grow. The leadership at Lincoln Elementary centers around an unified team approach to maximize student learning that looks at the whole child both academically and socially/emotionally. The leadership at Lincoln Elementary includes a strong building principal, building leadership team (BLT), professional learning community (PLC), and coaching model to support teaching staff.

The building principal leads the building from a relationship based framework. This individual is data driven and student focused, offering book studies and professional development opportunities that support the school's philosophy and multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework that has been developed over the last number of years. Elected by colleagues, the building leadership team has the responsibility to develop yearly building goals and have an incremental role in guiding staff professional development to ensure academic excellence. Lincoln Elementary teaching staff engage in weekly PLC work with the focus of ensuring instructional practices are meeting the needs of our students. The coaching model is focused on partnering with teaching staff to strengthen the core curriculum that Lincoln is known for, along with supporting staff responsible for delivering individualized instruction to students needing it.

An example of how Lincoln Elementary functions as an unified team of school leaders would be through stakeholder meetings. Using the MTSS framework, stakeholders meetings are held throughout the school year with grade level teams and the building student intervention team (SIT). Teachers review reading, math, and Code of Conduct data at PLC using best practice guidelines staff have continued to embed through their professional development learning opportunities. Students below district cut scores are identified to be discussed at grade level stakeholder meetings. At these meetings, grade level teams, interventionist, and SIT members make data driven decisions for appropriate interventions for students identified as needing additional supports to ensure that all students learn and grow. A recommendation that may be a result of a stakeholders meeting is to schedule a Behavior Support Team meeting. The Behavior Support Team (BST) uses a problem solving model to assure that students are offered interventions appropriate for the student's individual needs.



## **Part VI – STRATEGIES FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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The single most influential practice which has shaped our school's success has been the development, implementation, and focus on our Code of Conduct Character Education Social Emotional Learning Framework within our multi-tiered system of support. At Lincoln Elementary, this has led to healthy, engaged learners, which has increased student learning, and ultimately resulted in strong academic school achievement.

The Code of Conduct Character Education Social Emotional Learning Framework is comprised of five standards: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty, Kindness, and Fairness. The five standards reflect student learning outcomes and student I-can statements or teaching points. The outcomes emerged through a cross-referencing process of using the eight social emotional competencies of the Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment and Eric Jenson's social operating system. Our Building Leadership Team developed teaching points using the Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment Ratings Scale questions. A writing team then developed Understanding by Design lessons to support the teaching points. Currently, teachers deliver these lessons in all classrooms as part of core instruction, and assess and report the outcomes three times per year on the student report card. Students identified at-risk through the report card rating are then screened by teachers using the Social Academic Emotional Behavior Rating Scales--SAEBRS. Students qualifying for additional support receive intervention through the 2nd and 3rd Tiers from support services and special education staff. This process took nearly three and a half years to complete, and has resulted in a robust, universal, and consistent model to develop social emotional competencies in our students.

As a result, all classroom teachers teach the Code of Conduct Character Education Social Emotional Competencies using the framework developed by our Building Leadership Team and curriculum writing teams. This core instruction guarantees each student has a path to developing social emotional competency and a means to receive additional support should they be at-risk. Our entire school community focuses and rallies around supporting the whole child. With the Code of Conduct as the backbone of our school culture and as a vital community emphasizing these core standards and practices, Lincoln Elementary is achieving strong and consistent student and school academic success.