

U.S. Department of Education
2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

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

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

Official School Name CSA Lincoln Campus
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 750 5th Street
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Columbus State IN Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 47201-6307

County Bartholomew County

Telephone (812) 376-4447 Fax _____

Web site/URL <https://www.bcscschools.org/Page/25> E-mail findleyb@bcsc.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* Dr. Jim Roberts E-mail robertsj@bcsc.k12.in.us
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Bartholomew Consolidated School District Tel. (812) 376-4234

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 Dr Jill Shedd
(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, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The electronic signature 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 2021 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 must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2015 and grades participating in statewide assessments must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2019.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020.
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 current school year (2020-2021) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools.)

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

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not the district.)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

3. Number of students as of October 1, 2020 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0
K	30	24	54
1	28	25	53
2	26	25	51
3	25	29	54
4	26	23	49
5	28	28	56
6	23	25	48
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	186	179	365

*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):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 5.8 % Asian
 - 1.9 % Black or African American
 - 10.4 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 78.3 % White
 - 3.6 % 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 2019 - 2020 school year: 4%

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, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	11
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2019 until the end of the 2019-2020 school year	3
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	14
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2019	373
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.04
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	4

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

Spanish, Bengali, Indonesian, Japanese, Hindi, and Marathi

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

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 27 %

Total number students who qualify: 97

8. Students receiving special education services: 17 %
61 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. All students receiving special education services should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>1</u> Autism | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities |
| <u>0</u> Deafness | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness | <u>1</u> Other Health Impaired |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay | <u>36</u> Specific Learning Disability |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance | <u>38</u> Speech or Language Impairment |
| <u>1</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: 6
10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	1
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	14
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	8
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	6
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 26:1

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

Required Information	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017	2015-2016
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	97%	97%
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 2020.

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.

CSA Lincoln Elementary is a project-based learning environment that is dedicated to preparing socially engaged citizens who excel in an information and technology-rich society.

16. Briefly describe how your school has been operating during the current 2020-2021 school year (e.g., open as usual, online only, a hybrid model, etc.)? If different grade levels in your building operate in different ways, include this. If the school began with one model and switched to another partially through the year, include this as well.

CSA Lincoln began the 2020-2021 school year with students attending in-person and online. Teachers were responsible for creating lesson plans and instructing both sets of students through the first quarter of the school year. Because many of our students were attending in person, our school district moved the few online students to different online teachers within the school district starting in October 2020. Due to rising COVID-19 numbers, our school district transitioned to online-only from October through December 2020. Both online and in-person options were available to start the second semester, with only a few students remaining online for our school. Students have had the option to attend in person since January 2021, and the school district is projected to end the school year open as usual while still offering an online option.

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

Eleven years ago, Lincoln Elementary was converted from a traditional neighborhood school that typically received failing school grades to a project-based learning school. Parents submit a simple application that includes questions regarding socioeconomic status, ethnicity, special education services, and ELL services. A stratified lottery drawing takes place each February to select the incoming kindergarten class. It is stratified instead of a general drawing as priority is given to students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, as well as our demographics must mirror those of the school district.

PART III - SUMMARY

A year ago, we sent every student home with a t-shirt that read, “I am Lincoln.” It was the same shirt given to staff members at our beginning of the year workday. The principal shared with our staff, students, and parents that the reasoning behind the phrase was that as people in the community see us wearing the shirts, they get to see what is unique about going to school at CSA Lincoln. We believe that being a CSA Lincoln Elementary Husky is an incredible opportunity.

A large mural in the gym reads, “Meet the person that represents you, your family, and your school,” with three mirrors by each identifier. As students walk by the mirrors, we not only want them to realize that they are responsible for their actions, but that their actions also represent their family and our school, and so we should always strive to do so in the best way possible.

Our school building is the smallest of eleven elementary schools in our district, but our student population's size ranks ninth overall. Every year, parents sign up for the lottery drawing to receive a seat at our school. The waiting list is so extensive that the superintendent moved classes from twenty-five to twenty-seven to accommodate a few more prospective students. We now are the smallest building with the largest class sizes, but we see this as an opportunity to provide an exceptional experience for these additional students.

A scatter plot of our student home addresses would show the most geographically diverse group of students within our school district, with some even traveling from neighboring counties to attend. Our parent-teacher organization plans popular quarterly events for families to interact with since they don't come from the same neighborhood communities. Despite these challenges, one could argue that no school is more close-knit than ours.

Every Friday morning at Town Hall Meetings, our students sing the school fight song. Yes, our elementary school has a school fight song that every student knows. School spirit is rampant amongst students, parents, and the greater school community, and we love it. It is not uncommon for parents to send the school principal photos of their students in school spirit wear while traveling during school breaks with the hashtags #wearelincoln and #huskynation.

Nestled in the heart of Columbus, Indiana, our students are routinely engaged in a multitude of community events throughout the school year. These experiences, along with being a project-based learning environment, provide our students the opportunity to stretch themselves socially, culturally, and academically. It is common to see CSA Lincoln students presenting in front of community organizations, reading poetry at local coffee shops, or arguing for turtle crossing signs at city hall.

We are a school that invests our time and energy into relationships and are eager to hold ourselves accountable to our students and parents. For the past three years, students have completed quarterly climate surveys about their relationships with their teachers. The principal conducts it with anonymous forms without the teacher present. Students are provided with two ‘yes or no’ prompts. “Do you like your teacher?” and “My teacher wants me to be successful.” Over the past three years, teachers have averaged an approval rating of over ninety-nine percent. Parents often share how much they love the relationships that exist between their child and teachers. These strong relationships are why our school experiences very low mobility in student turnover, with almost no families leaving the school unless they move out of the district.

We are a school that loves to celebrate success. We believe that every child should experience success in elementary school, and that experience will propel them to want to achieve more. We also know that success looks very different for every student and has been diligent in creating students’ opportunities, regardless of their circumstances.

We also are a school that enjoys having fun. “Work Hard, Play Hard” is our mantra, and we take advantage of every opportunity to enjoy our time together. Classes celebrated the 2017 solar eclipse with Moon Pies, Capri Sun, specialty glasses, and a dance party. The Indiana State Superintendent, Dr. Jennifer McCormick, spoke at our school’s 50th Anniversary celebration a year later as we buried a time capsule. More recently,

students received oatmeal creme pies at our 'Back at School Celebration' in late March as a nod to the good old days, as the school district approved the return of field trips and loosening of COVID-19 restrictions on visitors to buildings.

CSA Lincoln Elementary is an exceptional place for students to learn and grow. It is most deserving of the nomination to be a National Blue Ribbon School!

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

CSA Lincoln Elementary benefits from district-level teams that provide instructional and assessment guidance and resources for the core curriculum. Much work has been done over the past five years to align instructional and assessment practices across all eleven elementary schools while still allowing flexibility and choice depending on each school's unique needs.

Reading/ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies each have an adopted textbook series that includes a suggested scope and sequence to be utilized by teachers. Committees that included teacher representatives from all elementary schools have spent extensive time reviewing series before selecting an option that provides the most depth for our students. Teachers at CSA Lincoln utilize the textbook series' scope and sequence because they directly align with the district common assessments. For example, in sixth-grade mathematics class, students interact with the classroom teacher in mini-lessons before breaking off into small groups. The mathematics curriculum is provided via an online textbook and resources. Students can watch video examples by an online instructor and complete practice problems over the material covered that day. When working online, the software provides clues and helpful information for students struggling to solve the problem. The teacher also can monitor student progress so that they can provide support and feedback to students. In first-grade language arts, paperback anthologies are provided as well as an online textbook. One of the best resources within the language arts curriculum is leveled reading books. It is not uncommon for students to be working with parent volunteers, classroom teachers, teaching assistants, or the school administrator reading at-their-level books in the hallway. Fourth-grade students learn about our state's history outlined in academic standards. Textbook readings are combined with our "Famous Hoosiers" project. Students choose someone from Indiana's history and participate in a wax museum as they take on the persona and learn details about the life of their Hoosier. Science education is provided in workbook and textbook format. Because students also participate in weekly STEM classes, most of the project or activity-based learning takes place in STEM.

The district utilizes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as our instructional framework. UDL provides a framework for educators to utilize multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression around the content and skills taught within the curriculum. CSA Lincoln teachers also utilized differentiated instruction to meet the specific needs of students. Also, project-based learning and explicit instruction (I do, We do, You do) are integral components of instructional approaches found in our K-6 classrooms.

Learning standards were determined by a district committee that included grade level representation and are reviewed yearly to determine if changes need to be made. The school district utilizes Growth Model Report Cards (GMRC) for reporting student progress. Teachers utilize district-developed rubrics in determining student comprehension of the learning standard, and students are assessed a score determining their current progress toward grade-level expectations. GMRC has been well received amongst teachers and parents by providing clear guidance on what specific skills need to be addressed for each student.

Our school district began utilizing NWEA assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the year with the 2020-2021 school year. NWEA provides a wealth of reports that teachers utilize to track student and class progress. NWEA reports are sent home to parents after each assessment. All BCSC elementary students also have access to IXL, which was previously used as a summative assessment but has transitioned to a formative assessment and practice tool. Common assessments and writing prompts are provided by the district and are used by all teachers.

Teachers meet every week in professional learning committee (PLCs) meetings. Our PLC committees are vertically aligned so that mathematics teachers in third through sixth grade meet together, while the language arts teachers do the same. This allows for a uniform approach to instructional and assessment practices while also providing teachers with peers to share resources and suggestions. PLCs are ingrained in our culture and are seen as one of the most positive change agents we have utilized over the past five years.

One of the biggest changes that our school district made five years ago, which has played an instrumental

role in a smooth transition to online learning, was integrating a learning management system (LMS). Previously used to house online versions of the textbook series, Itslearning became our primary source of functionality this past spring when schools were closed.

In grades K-6, utilize Itslearning to upload lesson plans, video and text chat with students, upload instructional videos, and assess student work. The use of the learning management system eased the need to significantly alter curriculum and instruction during school closures because all students are provided with a Chromebook. The district provided hotspots for those families who did not have WIFI access.

When our school district returned to online learning this past October, all teachers still came to their classrooms and provided live instruction via Google Meet for their students. Utilizing live instruction with the functionality of Itslearning played a pivotal role in reducing learning loss during the second quarter of the school year. While we did see a few students who regressed on the NWEA middle of year assessment, most stayed stagnant or improved during the layoff. There is no substitute for in-person instruction, and we felt that this spoke highly of the commitment on the part of students, parents, and educators to make the most of a difficult situation.

1a. For secondary schools (middle and/or high school grades):

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

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

Before health and safety guidelines were implemented due to the spread of COVID-19, CSA Lincoln students participated in STEM, art, music, physical education, the library once a week. Because of social distancing expectations, sanitizing requirements, and efforts to reduce close contacts, we lost the use of three rooms that housed those curriculum areas and the school library. Significant adjustments were made to the functionality and location of these programs. It has been a successful transition thanks to excellent professionals who have maintained a positive attitude and willingness to be flexible.

“Specials on a Cart” isn’t necessarily a new concept in the education field, but it brought new meaning to art this year with the directive to reduce the amount of paper and supplies that were shared with students. Previously, lesson plans had to be adjusted to transition from projects that usually lasted weeks to “one and done” experiences. Instead of quickly sorting supplies depending on the grade level in her room, our art teacher now travels to fourteen different classrooms throughout the week.

Because grade-level classes are connected with an open passageway, our music teacher has had to adjust his plans entirely to keep from disrupting the neighboring class. While art moved to a cart, music class went outside. A sound system and microphone were purchased, lesson plans were changed, and it worked! Usually confined to a narrow space on the gym stage, music has incorporated more opportunities for students to express themselves through dance this year. Moving the class outdoors also allowed students to have more mask breaks.

With the mask and social distancing requirements, our physical education class was presented with a unique challenge. Again, lesson plans were scrapped, and weather permitting, the physical education class moved outside. Every physical education class starts with a walk outside that doubles as a mask break, even on cold days. A return to calisthenics’ traditional physical education format to ensure social distancing has replaced many of the games played in the gym, but areas titled “Mask Break Zones” remind us that everything has changed.

COVID-19 has brought about positive impacts. When the community-sponsored Mill Race Marathon and Kids Fun Run were canceled last fall, it presented our school with an opportunity. Our PE teacher adjusted

her curriculum so that all students began a training regiment that culminated in our Kids Fun Run held at the neighboring track. All students who completed the event (walking or running) still received a medal. It was a huge hit, and we plan to continue with it even when the community event returns.

Challenges due to COVID-19 have pushed us to think differently. Since students were unable to complete longer art projects that would have been displayed in our annual art celebration, our art teacher has planned a Fine Arts Day that will be held in late May. She has already booked several local bands, including a Taiko drumming club, that will be playing. Students will be engaged in activities outside the typical curriculum throughout the day.

3. Academic Supports:

CSA Lincoln's ability to effectively support our diverse and individual students' academic needs is one of the leading reasons our school has been nominated for this prestigious award. Generally speaking, we have successfully looked at the students as individuals and not as data points. Huge strides have been seen in our students due to the hard work of many staff members who go above and beyond to build positive relationships with students so that they know they are loved and supported.

Specific strategies include the use of small heterogeneous group learning within the classroom environment. Students achieving below grade level and are only provided below grade level material stand very little chance of catching up. Special education students receive push-in services during core content instruction and are included in learning experiences with students of varied abilities. Heterogeneous small groups benefit those learning below, at, and above grade level. Before COVID-19, parents and community members volunteered daily within classrooms to support small group learning. The loss of these people as resources for our students has had a negative impact on our student's growth. We have been able to minimize this loss by utilizing our principal, and in fifth grade, a parent working as an online math tutor.

In addition to push-in services, depending on their IEP requirements, special education students meet daily or weekly with the special education teacher and teaching assistants to work on their goals, review core instruction, and complete assessments with accommodations. Our students identified as receiving special education services perform exceptionally well on state-mandated assessments. We know this is a direct result of the support provided by our teachers and staff.

Our student population also contains many students who are identified as High Ability through district evaluation. While students are given a choice to move to the Academic Challenge (AC) programs housed at another elementary school, our families almost always choose to keep their child at CSA Lincoln. To support these families, we have developed individualized learning plans for each student and started the Adventure Club. Adventure Club is open to students identified as high ability, and any student a teacher deems is ready for a challenge. Our instructional coach, and building-level high ability coordinator, meet with these students weekly. During this time, students complete challenges that require them to think critically at higher levels.

Other supports include English Language Learners (ELLs) being serviced by a teaching assistant weekly. A Book Buddies Coordinator meets four times a week with third-grade students who perform below grade level in reading comprehension. Volunteers with Big Brothers & Big Sisters who have "littles" in our building have been meeting with them virtually.

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

At CSA Lincoln Elementary, we follow a simple motto of “Work Hard, Play Hard.” We believe that school should be fun, and when school is fun, students are engaged and willing to learn. While the motto originated from the staff, students and parents quickly embraced the philosophy that encompasses all aspects of our school culture. Large signs hang throughout the building with the motto. It is also a common hashtag used by teachers, administrators, and parents on social media, but it goes much deeper than these tangible examples.

We believe that every child should experience the joy of being successful. Success looks different for each child. It could be academic success, growing in their maturity, or making a new friend. The higher degree of difficulty in reaching that goal comes with a more fulfilling sense of accomplishment. Our goal is to push our students to reach their full potential. When that child achieves success, we must celebrate it.

Like success, the celebration looks different for each accomplishment. A framework was created that outlines levels of student recognition. Academic and athletic team achievements are recognized with banners in the hallway. A positive behavior system is in place to recognize individuals and classes with rewards. Other non-structured celebrations exist to accommodate the individual successes of students that may not be categorized.

The need to celebrate has been needed more this year than ever before. We have been intentional about taking breaks on lovely days to go outside so students can take their masks off, laugh, play, and enjoy a bit of normalcy. We even celebrated the first anniversary of schools closing in Indiana with a “Back at School Celebration” on March 22nd, 2021, that included games and Little Debbie Oatmeal Creme Pies and Hostess Ho-Hos for everyone as life starts to resemble the good old days before COVID-19.

A telling example of how we continue to engage our students is seen by the number of students who returned to our building from online learning during the school year. Like every school in our corporation, a portion of our families chose to start the year at home due to concerns regarding COVID-19. We had over eighty students start the year online. Only nineteen students remain online. Parents reported the reasons for returning weren’t just about safety, but that their children missed being part of the school culture.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

CSA Lincoln Elementary is a PBL (project-based learning) environment. Every project must include community partnerships with a focus on empathy. Thus, our students are routinely challenged to solve problems that will support those in our community.

What once started as grade-level connections with community partners has developed into long-lasting relationships that continue to benefit our students and school. A few examples of this can be seen through projects like the Fireman’s Cheer Fund, first-graders collect and help the local fire department package gently used toys during the holiday season that are distributed to needy families; the Fifth-grade Career Fair, students learn to write resumes, and interview with local businesses to spend part of a school day working at their place of business; and Contraptions for a Cause, a project that third-grade students present Rube Goldberg simple machines at a local convention hall. Visitors donate spare change to try the device and learn about local non-profits. All donations are then given to the non-profit organizations. This investment in the community has paid dividends in the form of community members volunteering in our building as tutors, Book Buddies (a program that pairs a community member with a struggling second and third-grade student), and event volunteers. Local businesses are eager to donate project supplies, provide financial assistance, and actively seek to support our school through community service opportunities. United Way routinely sends employees to help clean up our school grounds. Dorel, a local child car seat manufacturer, donated nine outdoor picnic tables for outdoor classrooms and lunch seating.

School recognition within the community has paved the way for us to address our students' needs and families in need quickly. A local food pantry drops off excess fruits on Friday that are sent home with needy families. Glasses, extra shoes, and Local churches provide support when needs such as extra glasses and shoes arise.

COVID-19 complicated things, but our school community has pulled together to make the most of it. When the schools shut down last spring, our PTO (parent-teacher organization) promoted and organized dining nights at local restaurants where current students' parents were employed. A local church paid the rent and bought Christmas presents for two students this past December when their mother could not work due to contracting COVID-19. Social media also played an integral role in keeping families connected to our school during the shutdown. The principal posted video announcements every day that included video submissions from parents, students, and teachers. These were a huge hit and were even highlighted in the local newspaper.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

CSA Lincoln teachers were presented with a unique challenge when schools reopened in August. Each school was responsible for teaching both students on campus and online. Due to physical distancing expectations, relatively small numbers of students online, and desire not to group online students in multi-grade level classes, teachers provided instruction to both groups. As you can imagine, this puts an enormous strain on teachers to do both, all while managing the new health and safety guidelines.

Support came in multiple forms. The principal designated himself as the point of contact for all eighty online families and addressed any instructional, technology, or logistical issues that arose during the school day. The main office was converted to include multiple tables and storage bins to support the drop-off and pick-up of online students' supplies. The office staff also helped teachers by handling all copies, orders, etc. This process lasted through the first quarter until the school district shifted our online students to online district teachers, allowing classroom teachers to focus solely on their large in-person classes.

Typical beginning of year professional development was limited only to new health and safety guidelines at the building level. The principal met with the school leadership team before the school's opening to discuss and address teachers' and support staff's health concerns. This included revamping our arrival and dismissal processes, shifting teacher assistant schedules and responsibilities, relocating lunchtime outdoors, and consistent communication with parents about updated protocols. The school district surveyed teachers multiple times before and during the school year to evaluate whether they felt comfortable teaching in the buildings. One hundred percent of our staff chose to remain in the building instead of teaching online.

During the school year, the principal chose to limit all professional development to include only health and safety measures. Those not in schools do not truly understand the immense strain and burden we have laid at the feet of our educators. By filtering district initiatives, reducing unnecessary meetings, and taking opportunities to celebrate successes, teachers have felt supported and valued throughout this tumultuous year.

4. School Leadership:

When our school principal started six years ago, he said, "There are two types of people who work in a school. Teachers and those who help teachers." Since then, our school has been on a transformational journey that embodies the very essence of teamwork by utilizing a shared leadership approach to decision-making and reorganizing resources to maximize the impact on student achievement.

His servant leadership style is seen daily in our classrooms by our teachers and students. In addition to walkthroughs, the principal schedules forty-five minutes a week in each classroom to offer support similar to what a teaching assistant would provide. For example, in third grade, he is often working in small groups utilizing Versa Tiles. His fifth-grade time is usually with small groups but with a focus on reading comprehension. In first and second grades, he's generally working hip-to-hip with a student on various tasks. His time has become so ingrained in our weekly routine that if he needs to miss a day due to a

meeting, teachers quickly reschedule for another time later in the week.

Our principal was enrolled in the Indiana Principal Leadership Institute (IPLI) over the past two years. IPLI provided an extensive amount of professional development opportunities and a framework for supporting our school growth. As part of the program, two teachers accompanied him over the summer to a multi-day training, joined him for leadership meetings throughout the 2018-2019 school year, and were charged with developing an action-research project. This program led our school to begin the Marzano High-Reliability School Certification process. To date, our school has completed three of the five certification levels. Only a handful of schools in Indiana earn the Level 3 certification: Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum.

In addition to developing new COVID-19 plans and procedures for the school, our principal continues to lead by example. Every child needs to have their temperature taken before being allowed into the building, and most of our students are dropped off by parents in our car line. Our principal starts every morning in the car line, rain or shine, checking student temperatures. For parents and students, he is the first person that greets them every morning. He could have delegated this job to a teaching assistant, but typical for him, he would not ask anyone to do something he isn't willing to do himself.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

Our school district utilizes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as our instructional framework. UDL was initially intended to support learning for special education students but was seen as a model that could support all learners and become more widely accepted.

UDL provides a framework for educators to utilize multiple means of representation, engagement, and expression around the content and skills taught within the curriculum. By providing multiple viewpoints, methods, and strategies for students to be introduced to the curriculum, students engage in the material in various formats. We know that our students come from diverse backgrounds and bring varying skill sets with them. UDL goes beyond good teaching and engages educators to think more critically about their lesson plans and their students. The school principal was part of a district delegation that attended a weeklong UDL training at Harvard University a few years ago, creating a tool for PBL educators to ensure that all components of a PBL project are tied to the UDL guidelines.

CSA Lincoln is a PBL school, and while projects are tied directly to the Indiana state standards, each PBL experience also focuses on empathy. In December of 2018, our sixth-grade students culminating event for their writing project was volunteering at the local Festival of Lights parade, where they offered poetry and hot chocolate to cold spectators. Many people donated money, and our principal presented two opportunities regarding the donations. Students could put it towards their end-of-year trip to Chicago, Illinois, or the school could write checks to two BCSC Title I schools where the money would be used to cover the outstanding lunch debt of families who hover just above the threshold for free lunch assistance. They chose to support these students, and not only was the debt cleared, but each of those students started with extra money in their lunch account to start the second semester. This is an excellent example of how our school strives to engage students in meaningful learning opportunities beyond the curriculum.

Four years ago, we adjusted the enrollment application to include a question regarding student ethnicity. That has proven to be an effective mechanism in ensuring our student population is ethnically diverse.

Educators and administrators routinely participate in cultural diversity and implicit bias professional development provided by the school district. Our principal recognized an opportunity for improvement after a recent training over the importance of underrepresented populations "seeing" themselves in the curriculum and their school. He initiated a photoshoot of many students

identified as part of these populations, framing the photos and placing them throughout our hallways. This was very well received by students, school staff, and parents.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

John Hattie is a professor of education and director of the Melbourne Education Research Institute at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is a recognizable figure in education leadership. His research on performance indicators and their impact on student achievement has been a central focus of our school over the past several years. In short, his research has identified which factors have the highest impact on student achievement. Before school closures, during the shutdown, and continuing through the 2020-2021 school year that has seen varied scenarios as a hybrid, e-learning, and in-person, we can confidently say that our focus on collective teacher efficacy is the leading cause for our success.

With the highest effect size (1.57), collective teacher efficacy falls under the aspect of leadership, with the source of influence being the school. Collective teacher efficacy is the belief that we (teachers, support staff, and administrators) can positively affect students.

Our school has invested in people and relationships. Above all else, our decisions are based on what is best for students. This may require late nights or additional responsibilities by those working in our building, but it has become a way of life. At CSA Lincoln, it's not the exception, but an expectation that we hold each other accountable too. While staffing changes occur every year, one central theme has stayed consistent when bringing new people on board. They must love children and challenge us to get better.

Our school culture starts and ends with the focus on developing positive relationships with our students. By genuinely getting to know our students, we can better understand how to support their learning needs and concerns. Regardless of a student's background or label, they are challenged to perform at their best. This can be a frustrating process for some students and nearly impossible to achieve if you haven't taken the time to build a rapport with them. This is what sets us apart. Our teachers, staff, and administrators have invested heavily in building these relationships and believe that we can make a difference.

Believing in our student's potential has carried us through the difficult circumstances of the past year. Our students know their teachers care about them and will not accept anything less than their best. Whether we were teaching virtually or in person, students are present because they know if they are absent, they will be missed.

Parents will tell you that CSA Lincoln Elementary isn't a school but rather a family. The close commitment felt between students and teachers is the primary reason it is the most sought-after school by parents in the school district. Collective teacher efficacy, or more simply put, the belief that we can make a difference, is what has made us successful.