

Lincoln Elementary School Model Programs and Practices

School Information

CDS (County District School) Code: 41688826043566

County: San Mateo

District (Local Educational Agency): Burlingame Elementary

School: Lincoln Elementary School

Demographics

Enrollment: 476 students

Location Description: Suburban

Title I Funded: No

School Calendar: Traditional

Charter: No

Overview

“Lincoln is a community where all students, staff and families come together to develop compassionate, creative and collaborative problem solvers able to thrive in an ever-changing world”. - Lincoln Elementary School Mission

Nestled in an idyllic suburban neighborhood amongst towering and historic eucalyptus trees, watching parents walk their children to Lincoln Elementary School - it would be hard to believe that we are immersed in the bustle of Silicon Valley. Instead of filing into a one-room schoolhouse intent on the 3 R's, the children at Lincoln are immersed in the 4 Cs: collaboration, communication, creativity and critical-thinking. Lincoln's approach is, in fact, a direct response to our technology-driven surroundings. We are intentionally cultivating connections from the inside out.

Founded in 1950, Lincoln Elementary School boasts a student body of 480 students - 44% of whom are students of color, 13% english language learners, 7% socially disadvantaged - Lincoln serves a diverse and vibrant family body. With an average teacher tenure of 12 years, and several teachers who are returning alumni, Lincoln is a

place where the faculty feels supported, stimulated, connected and engaged. An active and progressive parent community further supports Lincoln in developing its core belief in balancing academic excellence and rigor with social-emotional intelligence; integrating education with the freedom and confidence to take risks.

With effective common core-based programs already in place - SWUN, VAPA arts integration, STEAM initiatives, design thinking and access to innovative materials and technology - Lincoln is committed to strengthening the foundation on how our students learn in order to maximize both student achievement and the benefit of our resources. We have embraced the philosophy behind Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset and believe that a flexible mind and a focus on effort and process will lead to positive results, both socially and academically.

We are a 21st century village committed to nurturing the hearts and opening the minds of our community of learners. Lincoln is place where each student is seen and known, and given the confidence and support to truly take risks in their learning and to become the best version of themselves. Our students are empowered to write their own narratives and to define their own success. Built on the idea of teaching compassion and resilience through connection and understanding, this connection will encourage and inspire students to develop into human beings who are both personally and globally engaged. Human beings who bear the confidence and passion to leap into their future to become agents of change.

Model Program and Practices

Name of Model Program/Practice: Cultivating Connections From the Inside Out

Length of Model Program/Practice: 2–4 years

Target Area(s): Chronic Absenteeism and Dropout Prevention, Education Supports, Parent, Family, and Community Involvement, Professional Development, Visual and Performing Arts

Target Population(s): American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Filipino, Hispanic, Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races, Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities

Strategies Used: School Climate, Small Learning Communities, Parent Engagement, Data-Driven Decision Making, Social/Emotional/Behavioral Support, Professional Development

Description

At Lincoln, we believe that the 21st century student must approach learning with flexibility, resilience, compassion and confidence in an uncertain and changing world. Lincoln's grass roots model program, Cultivating Connections from the Inside Out

(CCIO), focuses on social-emotional learning (SEL) with strong Common Core based programs, to enhance the existing learning environment and school culture, thus increasing student achievement and overall success.

According to a 2013 survey conducted by The Chronicle of Higher Education and APM Marketplace, half of the employers surveyed had difficulty finding recent graduates to fill vacancies. The reason was that these young graduates lacked the communication, adaptability, decision-making, and problem-solving skills needed for the job. (CASEL) It has now become essential to teach students how to learn, rather than what to learn. This shift in teacher pedagogy now requires an education in soft skills, with an approach built on connection and understanding.

Research has shown that a strong SEL program is fundamental to academic success. In a recent study, students who participated in SEL programs showed an 11 percentile-point gain in academic achievement, along with improved behaviors and attitudes. (Durlak et al., 2011) A national study found statistically significant associations between SEL skills in kindergarten and key outcomes for young adults later in life. (Jones et al., 2015) Lincoln's focus on SEL is not only intended to bolster academic achievement, but it is also a means to develop emotionally and mentally healthy individuals for the community as a whole.

With positive results from evidence-based SEL programs such as Second Step and Responsive Classroom, Lincoln has infused its curriculum with teacher- and student-led initiatives to further enrich the existing SEL approach. These programs were uniquely created for Lincoln's community of learners: a Buddy Program to build connection and community; assemblies focused on reinforcing a Growth Mindset; a home grown Recess Works program designed to address inclusivity, collaboration and conflict resolution; a student-led Green Team to promote environmental awareness and encourage student autonomy; weekly teacher-led professional learning communities to enhance collaboration and professional development; and parent education focused on student support.

With the 4Cs being an essential part of developing a 21st century mindset, it is ever-more important for students to approach learning with a strong SEL foundation. Equipped with a confidence in learning, students can take risks and develop the intrinsic motivation necessary to focus on learning for process, rather than outcome. CCIO empowers our students to create their own path of achievement. Through student, teacher and family connection, Lincoln's systemic approach to SEL provides our students with the social and emotional competencies to reach their full potential, at school and beyond.

Implementation and Monitoring

The CCIO program was established and implemented at Lincoln Elementary in three phases. The focus and importance of SEL grew organically as each phase yielded positive results.

Phase 1: Stand Alone

For the past several years, Lincoln teachers have used Responsive Classroom techniques as part of their daily classroom culture. This includes Morning Meetings, daily greetings upon arrival and departures, collaborative community-building activities and group problem solving. The resulting positive classroom climate set the stage for an academic mindset.

When the district adopted Second Step, Lincoln went beyond adoption requirements by weaving the paradigm into daily interactions. This quickly resulted in SEL language being used by both the teachers and students in managing both behavioral and academic issues.

Phase 2: Academic Integration

Lincoln wanted to capture the shift in climate and academic achievement - a responsive classroom to a proactive classroom - by articulating our SEL based values in a new mission statement. Our goal was to build compassion and resilience by tying in the 4Cs.

Armed with published outcomes data (Low et al.) and our own experience, we set out to have SEL enable academic excellence. Every teacher at Lincoln was given The Growth Mindset Coach as part of their professional development. SEL language and strategies were interwoven into the curriculum. Modeled after the 4Cs, Lincoln's very successful Recess Works program enriched recess opportunities with 4 unique stations: Motivation (hula hoops, jump rope), Relaxation (yoga/mindfulness), Collaboration (Pac Man Tag, Spike Ball), Creation (art activities), Imagination (fairy village, truck stop).

The performance of the CCIO program is being monitored by The Healthy Kids Survey, attendance, suspension rate, # of office referrals, SWUN assessments and CAASPP.

Phase 3: Staff Community

The staff feedback on the Growth Mindset was overwhelmingly positive. Many reported that the techniques resonated with their experience and others said it reinvigorated their passion for teaching. An unforeseen benefit, it served as an equalizer among the newer staff, who embodied this style of teaching, with the more tenured staff. An even greater sense of community was created, where the staff could share best practices.

Weekly Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) have been established and reflect a shift in teacher pedagogy, teaching soft skills vs. hard skills - teaching to the whole child as a 21st century learner, supporting the goal in developing children ready for middle school, high school and beyond. Given the uncertainty of future skills requirements for the workforce, building our students' emotional literacy is the most effective way to enable their success, productivity and happiness.

Results and Outcomes

CCIO has had a significant positive impact at Lincoln, across all aspects of school life. Here, we highlight three areas: academic achievement, student and staff engagement, and overall connectedness of the school community.

Academically, test scores show that Lincoln students outperform the district and state averages. In 2017, Lincoln students scored 81% in both ELA and Math for CAASPP. Both scores were higher than the BSD averages of 77% (ELA) and 75% (Math). In addition, Lincoln students scored 2% higher in ELA and 6% higher in Math versus the previous year's CAASPP results. CCIO has contributed to strong academic achievement and continued improvement in test scores year-over-year.

Much of this academic strength is rooted in consistent, productive engagement for both students and staff at Lincoln. For students, overall attendance rates are high, with only a 3.6% chronic absenteeism rate. Also, the Recess Works program has resulted in a nearly three-fold decrease in the number of office referrals, from 3–9 per week in Fall 2016 to 1–4 per week in Fall 2017. And in another sign of strong student engagement, there have been zero suspensions in the past two years.

The results from the most recent (2015–16) California School Climate Staff survey reports that 100% of staff feel that students are engaged in their learning, and 89% feel that adults foster caring relationships with students. They further reported that 74% of adults believe in the success of their students, and value creating a positive learning environment - one that fosters an appreciation for diversity in all regards. The vast majority of staff commended the school for providing a safe, supporting and inviting space for staff and students.

Finally, the results of the 2017–18 California Healthy Kids survey showed the exceptional connectedness of the entire school community, starting with its 91% response rate. In that survey, 100% of the students at Lincoln reported feeling safe at school, 99% feel that they are treated with respect, and 75% agreed that even when they break school rules they are treated fairly. Further, 77% of students feel a strong connection to the school, while 0% feel little connection. 72% of students feel a strong connection with an adult on campus and less than a third reported ever being harassed or feeling unsafe at school.

The results of an effective SEL program can be measured in test scores, attendance metrics and survey results. But perhaps they are best summarized by a current 5th grade student: "Lincoln, to me, is like my home away from home. All of my teachers have taught me some very valuable lessons like how to be a good friend, how to persevere, have grit... and so many more important things that are helping me get ready for life. I really don't want to leave next year, but [I know] that when I move on to the upper grades, I will be ready". As a result of CCIO, Lincoln students graduate feeling confident and prepared for their future.