

**School Innovation Fund Grant (SIF) - Round 2 (January 1, 2013 – August 31, 2015)**

**Schenectady City School District: Lincoln Elementary School  
"Best Practices"  
September 2015**

1. **Select at least one Best Practice that: (1) is currently being implemented; (2) is a direct result of your SIF grant implementation; (3) is supported by data; (4) addresses a school/district need; and (5) has an observable and positive impact on the school/district.**

**School/District Background**

Lincoln Elementary Community School, located in the middle of the City of Schenectady, has an enrollment of 330 students. With a free/reduced lunch rate of 90%, most of the students experience the traumatic effects of poverty, resulting in below grade-level academic performance and high rates of social-emotional-behavioral difficulties. The student population includes 35% Black students, 22% Hispanic students, 21% White students, 20% Asian students, and 2% Multi-racial students.

The Lincoln School Community determined that the whole-child approach with a wraparound services model would provide the students and their families with the supports they needed to increase achievement and other improvements. The Wraparound Model is now spreading across the district.

**Best Practice: Community-Oriented School Design Framework**

In implementing the Community School Model, Lincoln addressed the three aspects articulated by the National Center for Community Schools: strong academics, extended learning time, and wrap around support services including family engagement.

**Academic Improvement**

Lincoln employed a full-time Curriculum & Instruction Coach (CIC) to work in collaboration with CASDA (Capital Area School Development Association) to provide job-embedded Professional Development to the teaching staff. This included daily PLC (professional learning community) meetings, model lessons, curriculum mapping, lesson preparation, full-day data analysis, action planning sessions, and summer workshops. The implementation of the Learning Cycle System of planning, teaching, assessing, and adjusting to student needs allowing Lincoln teachers to become much more consistent in using data to inform their practice.

**Extended Learning Time**

During the school year, Lincoln partnered with the Boys & Girls Club to provide 120 students with nearly three hours of extended learning time each day. This approach combined academic and youth development activities. Certified teachers provided one hour per day of Common Core Learning Standards-aligned lessons. The Boys & Girls Club provided one hour per day of youth

development activities. Students also had a 45 minute period for a healthy snack and time and assistance with completing homework and reading independently.

During the summer, Lincoln provided a 100-hour Summer Learning Academy for over 80 students lagging behind in ELA or math skills. Certified teachers provided engaging instructional strategies targeted to help students make gains in reading and math and prevent summer learning loss.

### **Wrap Around Support Services**

The social services provided included a Family Empowerment Facilitator, a Family Center, mental health therapists from Child Guidance, a behavioral specialist from BOCES, and GED and ESL classes for parents. The Family Empowerment Facilitator worked full-time with parents on such things as school event planning, improvement of the school's physical appearance, resume writing, job searches, parenting workshops, attendance improvement, access to insurance and health care services, and advocacy and support of special needs children.

### **Evidence**

Lincoln's original SIF2 application outlined five goals: 1) Improvement in student achievement in ELA as indicated by NYS assessments and other measures; 2) Improvement in student achievement in math as indicated by NYS assessments and other measures; 3) Improvement in increasing student attendance; 4) Decreasing suspension and Office Discipline Referrals; and 5) Increasing family engagement.

The Lincoln School Innovation Fund Grant showed significant measurable gains toward achieving all goals:

- Lincoln's average daily student attendance increased from 93.0% in the baseline year of 2012-2013 to 94.3% in 2013-2014 to 94.4% in 2014-2015.
- Total Office Discipline Referrals decreased from 230 in 2012-2013 to 207 in 2013-2014 to 170 in 2014-2015.
- Family engagement as measured by family event attendance increased significantly. For example, attendance by fathers at *Dads Take your Child to School Day* increased from 9 in 2012-2013 to 30 in 2013-2014 to 40 in 2014-2015. Active participation in the PTO increased from 0 in 2012-2013 to 5 in 2013-2014 to 9 in 2014-2015. Attendance at Family Support Night, during which parents learn about the state tests and strategies for helping their students at home, increased from under 70 participants in 2013-2014 to nearly 90 in 2014-2015.
- ELA and math achievement was measured by both NYS assessments and SCSD interim and benchmark assessments. During the two-year grant period, the district was engaged in the process of selecting and refining the interim assessments which makes it difficult to compare one year to another; however, comparing November, 2014 to March, 2015, all grades except Grade 2 showed improvement in ELA. Math results were less consistent with Grade 4 performing very poorly, Grades

5 and 6 being down (although Grade 6 was up significantly from November to January), and Grade 3 increasing. On the NYS assessments, Lincoln decreased from 13% passing in 2013-2014 to 11% in 2014-2015 on ELA, and from 10% passing to 9% passing in math. However, Grade 6 ELA increased by 13%, Grade 6 math increased by 9%, and Grade 3 math increased by 3%. While not all scores were up across the board, the pockets of improvement indicate that improvement is beginning to take hold.

### **Sustainability**

In order to continue the community school implementation at Lincoln, the district has used a combination of general fund and Title I funding to maintain key components of the framework. The district has funded the salaries of the Community School Coordinator, Family Empowerment Facilitator, Curriculum & Instruction Coach (CIC), Behavior Specialist, and Reading Specialist. Additionally, the district has also provided funds for extended learning time, Professional Development, and teacher release time to work on data analysis and action planning with the CIC.