SCHOOL PROFILE

Lincoln Elementary School
1325 Theis Lane
Port Washington, WI 53074

Type of School:	***Elementary School (K-4)**
Location:	***Port Washington: Located 25 miles north of Milwaukee**
	*Suburban
Size:	***Approximately 350 students**
	*Typically three classes per grade level
	* One of three elementary schools in a city of 10,000.
Student Population:	***97% Caucasian, 2% African-American, 1% Other**
	*All students are included in a general education homeroom
Principal:	***John Taylor – Highly respected by all teachers, parents, community members, and fellow administrators**
	*Served Lincoln Elementary for approximately 20 years
Teachers:	***Majority of the teachers are experienced and have taught at Lincoln Elementary for many years.**
	* Majority of the teaching staff are Caucasian.

Summary of Classrooms, Teachers, and Students in the Research Study
Lincoln Elementary – Port Washington, Wisconsin

<u>**Spring Semester, 1999:**</u>

Grade:	Grades 1-2 Multiage
Teacher:	Jackie Oleson
	Jo Ellen Schlereth
Target Students:	Whole Class Observation

Grade:	Grade 4
Teachers:	Mrs. Rismeyer
Target Students:	Whole class observation; Travis – Student with Oppositional Defiant Disorder
Class Make-up:	20 students total

Grade:	Grades 1-2 Multiage
Teachers:	Heidi Bertler
Class Make-up:	20 students total

Grade:	Multicategorical Special Education Support
Teachers:	Mrs. Pinchott - special education teacher
	Melissa Meyer-Thompson - Paraprofessional
Target students:	The school has 15 students requiring EEN services.

Grade:	Kindergarten
Teacher:	Mrs. Gall
Target Students:	A student with Emotional Disabilities
Class Make-up:	students total:

<u>**1999-2000 Academic Year:**</u>

Grade:	Grades 2
Teachers:	Heidi Bertler
Target Students:	Stephen- Speech/Language needs; Zach
Class Make-up:	21 students total: All Caucasian

Grade:	Grade 4
Teachers:	Mrs. Rismeyer
Target Students:	Whole class observation; Levi; Eric – Hearing impairment; Alex – Language Processing Difficulties
Class Make-up:	21 students total; 11 boys, 10 girls; All Caucasian

Grade:	Grade 1
Teachers:	Sharon Matusinec

Target Students: One student with a Learning Disability; Several students with speech/language needs; Nico - Tourette
Class Make-up: 22 students total: 1 Hispanic; 1 Black; 20 Caucasian

Grade: Multicategorical Special Education Support
Teachers: Mrs. Pinchott - special education teacher
Melissa Meyer-Thompson - Paraprofessional
Target students: The school has 15 students requiring EEN services.

Grade: Grade 1
Teachers: Carol Burns
Target Students: Nathan; Robert; Randy
Class Make-up: students total; One student is biracial

Fall, 2000:

Interviews with students and parents

Researchers who observed and recorded data

Kim Beloin   Spring, 1999 – Spring, 2000
Paula DeHart   Spring, 2000
Michelle Zeigler   Spring, 1999
Nancy Proctor   Fall, 1999 – Fall, 2000

People Interviewed

Date	Name	Role	Interviewer
5-12-99	Ellen Charlier-Anglim	Reading Recovery	Interviewer: Ziegler
5-12-99	Heidi Bertler	Grades 1 & 2	Interviewer: Ziegler
5-6-99 10-14-99	Anthony Schaefer	Reading Specialist	Interviewer: Beloin
5-6-99	Jackie Oleson	Primary Multi-age	Interviewer: Beloin
5-6-99 5-20-99 3-15-99	Chris Rismeyer	4th Grade	Interviewer: Beloin Interviewer: Ziegler Interviewer:Beloin & DeHart
3-15-99	John Taylor	Principal	Interviewer:Beloin & DeHart
3-15-99	Carol Burns	1st Grade	Interviewer:Beloin & DeHart
3-15-99	Catherine Pinchott	Special Educator	Interviewer:Beloin & DeHart

11-28-00	Norman	Grade 2	Interviewer: Nancy Proctor
11-28-00	Shawn	Grade 3	Interviewer: Nancy Proctor
11-28-00	Shawn's Mother	Parent	Interviewer: Nancy Proctor
11-28-00	Charlie's Mother	Parent	Interviewer: Nancy Proctor

Curriculum:

University of Chicago Everyday math
Cunningham Method for reading/language arts
Dynamath

EMPOWER CITIZENS IN A DEMOCRACY:

Students help teaching staff develop the curriculum in the multi-age units.
The Explorer Group (site based management team) includes parents and staff. This group developed the school mission, vision, and goals in addition to new programs.
The wellness committee and other committees research and propose changes for ongoing school improvement.
The teachers decide on the most effective staffing arrangements.

INCLUDE ALL:

A Multiage program is available in the primary grades.
All students with mild/moderate disabilities (i.e., deaf/hard of hearing; emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, mental retardation) are included full-time in their general education homeroom with academic and behavioral support provided through the Student Tutoring Extension Program (STEP) as needed.

TEACH & ADAPT FOR DIVERSITY:

All students participate in the general education curriculum with adaptations and modifications.
Through the STEP program, special education staff members are available to work with all students, not just students with disabilities.
Reading instruction is at each child's instructional level, with flexible instructional groupings that change as children progress at their rate.
Some children receive additional reading instruction through the STEP program.
Reading Recovery is also available for those who may benefit from the program.
Science and Social Studies is taught to mixed age groups.
Approximately 75% of the teachers are trained in cooperative learning and use it effectively for the benefit of all children.

BUILD COMMUNITY & SUPPORT LEARNING:

STEP program staff provides flexible, yet consistent support to any student (with or without disabilities) needing assistance in any content area. Children needing help from STEP change from week to week depending upon the curriculum being taught and the student's needs.
Through the PALS program, fourth-graders serve as peer partners and work with kindergartners.

PARTNERING:

Explorer Committee (parents and school personnel) work together on the school mission, vision, goals, values, and activities.
Many parents volunteer in the classrooms on a daily basis.

Introduction

Lincoln Elementary School is a suburban school serving a homogeneous population of students with and without disabilities. Lincoln Elementary was chosen as a research site because the school community exemplifies the five principles of Whole Schooling in its own unique, yet effective way. This school profile will provide specific examples illustrating how each of the Whole Schooling Principles are implemented across age, grade, and ability levels.

Principle 1: Empower Citizens in a Democracy

The first principle of Whole Schooling is to help students learn to function as effective citizens in a democracy. This principle is the core goal of our public education system and is exemplified in a number of different ways. The examples below are taken mainly from interviews and observations over a two-year period of time. When looking at the many examples, several main themes or findings emerged.

Finding 1: Committed respected school leaders support the school community in democratic decision-making.

Mr. John Taylor has been the principal of Lincoln Elementary for approximately twenty years. When interviewing the staff, researcher asked about how they view the leadership of their building principal. One of the teachers stated the following about Mr. Taylor, "John is a strong, ethical, and moral leader." Another teacher echoed this sentiment, "I think my principal is the most moral person I know. He pushes us a lot and he doesn't have to. This is a high stress school. He is a saint. He is a wonderful person. The staff is a good dedicated staff and the principal is the moral force." Yet another teacher said, "I could never ask for a better principal. He takes action immediately. He is very complimentary to the kids. He comes in the classrooms at least once a week and makes himself very visible. He is firm, yet very warm and caring. He stands behind us 100%."

The staff spoke about why the building leadership is so important at Lincoln. One teacher commented, "John models for the staff that Learning is important. Doing your best is important. People are important." Another teacher added, "The dedication of the teachers, professionalism, and the professional dialogue, which comes from the leadership is very important. Also this school has a cooperative nature and puts forth collaborative effort for the benefit of the children." A final comment on this topic was, "The staff are very child-centered which comes from the principal. Our principal always says we should do what is in the best interest of the kids. That is how programming is decided. He is a great principal." It is clear to see that Mr. Taylor is highly respected as the leader of Lincoln Elementary. The staff were interviewed individually and were not aware of their colleagues' comments regarding Mr. Taylor, which adds credibility to this finding.

The staff and principal were also asked how decisions are made at Lincoln Elementary. Mr. Taylor commented, "We have a framework that is based on a school improvement framework. I use parent survey information that I bring to the staff and we establish school improvement committees based on the information in the parent surveys. The committees do the work and bring us (the whole staff) recommendations and we use consensus to agree on them and that drives our yearly goals. My role is as a catalyst for the teachers to do what they need to do. The school improvement committees seem to work well for us. I rely heavily on a high level of knowledge from the staff. I need to have all of the stakeholders informed at a high level to make this work effectively." Mr. Taylor is well read and very knowledgeable on this topic, among many others. The teachers also talked about reading and discussing weekly articles that he distributes to them.

When the staff were asked the same question regarding how decisions are made in this school. There were mixed comments. Some comments that paralleled the comments made by John Taylor and some comments that call democratic decision-making into question at times. This teacher concurred, "All of the instructional decisions are up to us. John gives advice if you want it, but he doesn't come in and tell us how to teach. He has a very experienced and competent staff." Another teacher stated, "I think our principal really lets us make a lot of decision. He isn't always in favor of our decisions, but he supports them. For example, he didn't like how we are doing the afternoon, but he said, 'You are all professional, so give it a try.' He thought it was leaning too much toward departmentalization. When it comes to our classrooms, we make the decisions. John makes many of the school-wide decisions. For example, tomorrow afternoon there is an assembly and it isn't a good time for our grade-level team, but if you try to accommodate everyone's schedule, there would never be a good time. So he needs to just make some of these decisions."

Two counter examples emerged from the interviews. Staff members were very honest, forthright and professional in stating their views. "John talks like we have the decision-making power, but if the vote doesn't come out the way the parents want it to or the way he wants it, then we vote again or it just happens." Another staff member mirrored very similar comments on this, "We pretend to get together and all vote, but I have asked to see the results times because I think the outcome is doesn't always reflect the group vote. However, I also think the administrator has a right to do what he thinks needs to be done. John has respect for children and for us and he treats us respectfully all of the time. I am really so thankful to work for him."

In summary, the data strongly show that Mr. Taylor is a respected and committed school leader. There is conflicting data based on staff opinion and experiences that calls into question democratic decision-making into question. Nevertheless, the staff have expressed such strong support and respect for Mr. Taylor that they feel comfortable with the decisions he does make. It is heartening to hear so many different teachers express their support, respect and appreciation for their building principal. Mr. Taylor is a strong educational leader with a well-earned and deserved reputation that reflects this.

Finding 2: Students are involved in leadership roles, decision-making and teaching.

There were a handful of examples that illustrated or confirmed that students were also involved in some leadership, decision-making and teaching roles. One of the teachers stated her beliefs on this, "We are all teachers. There is a fine line between helping and creating. Students are teachers as well. We can learn from everyone. Even students with special needs can teach us some things." During an observation in this teacher's classroom, this philosophy was put into action. The classroom teacher addressed the students, "Okay, it's teacher day, and I have my list here. Ms. B, "Norman, do you want to be the teacher? Come on up." Norman went to the overhead and taught his classmates while Ms. B. coached and supported him thru the exercise as needed.

In another classroom, the teacher gave her students many opportunities to make decisions on a daily basis. They decided whom to work with during partner and small group assignments and tasks. They also had options on some curriculum assignments and took votes on those choices when the group needed to come to agreement. At other times, they were allowed to make individual choices. Their teacher stated, "The students are in charge of their own actions and choices."

When interviewing one of the students, this third-grader had expressed some of his personal concerns and made the following suggestions. "Some things I would change. Wouldn't it be nice if all the rooms if had all the rules on the bulletin board. Also, there should be more grownups, so if someone is hurting you, there is someone around to tell, like on the playground."

Based on this limited data, there are some opportunities for students to be involved in leadership, teaching, and decision-making at Lincoln. This would also be an excellent area for the Lincoln Community to be mindful of and to explore further.

Finding 3: Schools grow and change quickly, but schools reform slowly.

Although finding 3 emerged out of the data from all eight research schools, observation and interview data did not provide evidence that finding 2 is present at Lincoln Elementary. However, it should be noted that this doesn't mean there are not times in which change or growth occurs quickly. It simply indicates that the researchers did not see or hear about such examples when conducting observational visits and interviews.

Finding 4: School leaders and teachers promote and believe that continual staff development, research, and collaboration improves the quality of education for all.

There were several examples to illustrate this finding at Lincoln Elementary. This was one of the unique findings at Lincoln. In schools, teachers and other staff members are so busy juggling all of the demands that it is very difficult to find time or dedicate oneself to

continual development and collaboration. Yet, somehow, teachers make time to do this. At Lincoln, there was an ongoing force that focused on the critical nature of continual staff development. The staff at Lincoln appears to be hungry to learn all they can and to discuss it among themselves and others. This is why they became involved in this research project. One teacher stated, "One thing that is unique about this school is the dedication of the teachers, their professionalism, and the ongoing professional dialogue which comes from the leadership." Another teacher added, "The staff is a very good and dedicated staff and the principal always encourages us to shoot high." A third teacher commented, "We all push ourselves to do what is best for the children and their learning. John also pushes us further to always be thinking and learning and trying things. That adds stress. Some of the stress is from ourselves and some is from John pushing us to be better and better and better. He is a wonderful principal. He wants to push harder and make us think harder and become more reflective teachers. His reasons are good ones and I believe in them. He also pushes himself. He hired about 50% of us, so he knows us and believes in our level of competence pretty well. It is a high stress school because it is the type of people he hires and he expects the best out of everyone, so I think it is a combination."

There were examples of staff collaborating and teaching together throughout the school building. There are a couple of muti-age (Grades 1-2) units where two teachers collaborate and team-teach. The Student Tutoring Enrichment Program (STEP) staff work as a team to schedule and serve students with and without disabilities who request or need academic assistance. There are also grade-level collaborative partnership and teams that work together to educate the students. These are just a few examples of how the principal and staff collaborate to provide a quality education for all.

Finally, there was interview in which concerns about collaboration were brought forth. "We have a wonderful school, wonderful parents, but missing a little bit of fun. People stay until 9:00 at night, I want to be a good teacher too, but need a balance. People talk about the high stress they experience. People need to work more with each other, within teams, and collaborate. We need people to be mentor teachers to new teachers. I felt so alone when I started. Next year we will have two new teachers." This teacher mentions some concerns and ideas for improvement that should be considered for the overall health and staying power of the teaching staff.

Finding 5: Diversity across ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture, ability, etc. is accepted and valued.

There were few examples to illustrate this finding at Lincoln elementary because the students are a very homogenous group. The student population is 97% Caucasian, and the great majority of children are from middle-class families. Even the special education population is fairly small with most of these students experiencing mild disabilities, such as speech/language and mild learning disabilities. One of the teachers said that Lincoln is a good school because "it is one that is aware of kids who have different abilities and we just work with that." Another teacher expressed her strong beliefs in accepting, valuing, and including all of the students with disabilities in general education classes, but went

on to add, "It is easy for me to say that all kids belong because we haven't had children with more severe disabilities." Based on multiple observations over time, it appears that the students with disabilities are accepted and valued by their peers and the staff. Given changing demographics in suburban schools, at some point, Lincoln will being serving a more diverse population. It would be interesting to observe and discuss this situation when it occurs.

Finding 6: Students, Teachers, and parents are encouraged and empowered to develop and communicate their true selves.

Although this finding also emerged out of the data from all eight schools, there were limited examples of finding 6 at Lincoln. Again, a word of caution is that this may be a stronger finding at Lincoln than what was observed, recorded and shared during the times that research was conducted. Based on the observational data, students in various classrooms were observed to be excited about learning on a consistent basis. They talked to each other and to their teacher about what they were learning and how they felt about learning new information and skills. Children were allowed to make choices and indicate their preferences. For example, some children chose to go to the library to read for their morning recess. During the morning recess, the Librarian agreed to monitor the children who chose to read during their recess period instead of play outside. Choices on how to spend recess time is an example of empowering children to make their own decisions about how they want to use their recreational time.

Students were also given academic choices that encourage their individual autonomy. During a language arts class, the students were instructed to write about a place they like to go. The classroom teacher addressed the students, "If you don't really have a place, why don't you create a place, or make up a place. I'm interested in why you like to go there, even if it's a place in you mind."

This would be a good finding to investigate further if the opportunity arises. Given the high stress that the staff already experiences in developing and maintaining high teaching standards, this may not be the time to do such an in-depth investigation of the merits of this finding at Lincoln. However, it is something to keep in mind for future research.

Principle 2: Include All

The second principle of Whole Schooling supports instructional practices where All children learn together across culture, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, and age. This principle is exemplified in many different ways. The following findings and corresponding examples will demonstrate this.

Finding 1: Students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum.

The Student Tutoring Extension Program (STEP) is a fairly unique program that was designed and implemented at Lincoln Elementary. This program promotes the practice of inclusion and of students with disabilities having access to the general education curriculum and classroom. This program has been in existence since 1999. According to one of the teachers, "The STEP program allows 80% of the students with disabilities to be kept as close to the general education classroom curriculum as possible. The other 20% usually need some additional instruction in specialized curriculum beyond what they receive in general education. The STEP program is staffed by the reading specialist, a multi-categorical special educator, a special education paraprofessional and the speech therapist. Any child, with or without a disability, can receive help from STEP and the children who receive help change from week to week depending upon the curriculum and needs of each child. Children receive services from the STEP staff during part of the class time in which the class is studying the topic that the child needs additional help with. Therefore, there is no set schedule of specific children getting the same specialized help at the same time each day all year round. The schedule changes from day to day and week-to week based on the individual needs of the children. The curriculum that the child is working on with the STEP staff comes from the classroom teachers. We were all concerned that kids were learning to be good remedial students, but were not learning to be good students. The STEP program gives them support for becoming good students."

After describing the structure of the program, another STEP staff member described how the collaborative nature of this program is a more efficient way of delivering services to students. "We wanted to make better use of instructional time for the students with special needs. Rather than having some students see three different specialists in a day, this program streamlines the services and students still see the specialists, but the communication and planning between the specialists allows for more consistent services for the child. Maintaining flexible scheduling is a key component to the success of STEP versus the old structure, which had students coming for resource help on the same days at the same times no matter what."

In addition, the special education teacher stated, "The STEP program has been the greatest way to help students meet regular curriculum goals. I can't be in all of the classrooms because there is one of me and there are 5 grade levels. The point of the STEP program is not to take over instruction, but to assist with whatever the classroom goals are. I want to make sure that what I do with the kids in intensive instruction parallels what they are getting in the classroom. I expect the students with special needs to do everything that all of the classroom students are doing. They can answer questions in different ways, they can get extra assistance from STEP staff, and they can get the book on tape. We try to work with small groups when possible. It's hard to have a book study with one child who has expressive language programs. The small group will often consist of a mix of students – those with and without disabilities. The child can bring a friend with them. Because we are doing the same curriculum as the classroom teachers, the nondisabled students can also benefit."

The STEP program is utilized throughout the school so all students are included in general education classes and have complete access to the general education curriculum. The program is still in its infancy, but the staff believes it has shown great potential for serving the needs of all of the children.

Finding 2: Inclusion is valuable for kids with disabilities.

Based on the development and implementation of the STEP program as a vehicle for serving students in an inclusive manner, it is clear to see that the staff believes that inclusion is valuable for students with disabilities. In addition to this, there were a few other examples to illustrate this finding.

One of the classroom teachers shared the following student examples. "I don't like pull-out. I have different standards for every kid. As long as they do their best, that is fine. One of my students would probably categorized as significantly disabled based on behavior. Last year, he screamed and yelled when he didn't want to do something. This year, he tried it twice and I when his classmates and I ignored the outbursts, he stopped. He may also have some perceptual learning problems, but I think most of it was behavior. There is no need for this child to be educated in a separate classroom. He belongs here."

Another example involves a non-Caucasian child. The teacher commented, "I have one child that transferred here from a self-contained classroom in Milwaukee Public Schools. There were issues regarding abuse. Being a non-white kid in Port Washington is not a pretty thing. I think many of his issues have to do with race. He currently has the label of emotionally disturbed, but he is doing very well and he doesn't need to be self - contained."

This school only has fifteen students who qualify for special education. The school is fairly small in population. All of these students are served in general education classrooms. From an observer's standpoint, it is nearly impossible to tell who those students with disabilities are conducting classroom observations. The students are full members in their general education classes and the staff works together to serve them because they believe that inclusion is valuable for these children.

Based on observations of specific students, the researchers noticed that there are times when students with disabilities are not participating in classroom instruction or are experiencing a need for more support in order to participate. In one classroom, there were four students with special needs (not all four qualify for special education). During class discussions, all three students rarely ever talk or contribute to the discussion. Yet the other student in the class, doesn't hesitate to participate, talk and contribute when the opportunity arises. In another classroom, a student consistently has difficulty with math assignments. The special education aide is in the classroom supporting students during class, but this student appears to need some intense support given the amount of times he asks for help and the lack of progress is demonstrates on his math work when working independently.

Although students are placed in inclusive classrooms, it will be important to continue monitoring their degree of participate and their academic outcomes in order to make adjustments in the amount of services that are provided to individuals and the structure or format in which those services are provided.

Finding 3: Inclusion improves the educational experience for all kids.

The development of the STEP initiative was not only to provide more streamlined and effective services for students with disabilities, but to also have a vehicle for serving students without disabilities when they needed or requested additional or specialized assistance. Through the use of STEP, the educational experience is improved for all students.

In an effort to not repeat some of the examples already shared that also fall under this finding, here is one additional example in support of this finding. During an observation, Shawn (a student with special needs) was participating in a discussion with his small group while Hannah took notes on the character traits. Ms. B sat down with the group to help guide the discussion and ask questions. From her input and support, she was not only helping and supporting Shawn, but she was also helping two girls in the group get focused and develop more direct questions. Support was provided to multiple children by Ms. B. and the entire small group benefited from that. This support would not be available if Shawn were receiving his educational services in a special education classroom.

In opposition to this finding is a concern regarding the amount of time and effort that some classrooms teachers devote to an individual student with a disability who is included. During observations over time in one of the classrooms, three students consistently took up a tremendous amount of the teacher's time and energy that there was little time left in an instructional period to monitor the other students. This is a common concern and challenge in classrooms where there are some very needy students and not enough support provided. It is a concern for staff in any school to be mindful of and make adjustments as needed in order for all of the students to have a productive educational experience.

Finding 4: Inclusion provides positive, proactive supports for students.

There were multiple examples of this finding at Lincoln Elementary. One powerful example took place in an upper elementary classroom that includes a child with an emotional disability. The teacher stated, "There is a group of boys who reach out and try to develop relationships with Trevor. These students were even more considerate after Trevor came back from spending two weeks at the hospital due to his emotional problems."   In this case, the classmates took it upon themselves to provide support for their classmate. That kind of peer support comes from the modeling of adults. In an interview with a younger student, he summed up the support system at Lincoln in a few

words, "Lincoln's is a nice place. Nobody gets hurts here." Nobody gets hurt because the whole school community is proactive and supportive.

Based on observational data in different classrooms, a number of different teachers and staff members also demonstrated this finding. For example, based on multiple observations in Ms. R.'s classroom, she is consistently very positive with the children. She has a warm and cheerful personality and the children respond positively and cheerfully to her and to each other due to her modeling. She makes useful and appropriate accommodations for the children in her class. Given this, in most cases, the reading differences appear to be seamless and without big differences. The two books she is using to differentiate reading instruction are both interesting and on a similar topic, just at different reading levels. Over time, it was also clear to see that Ms. R. has been drawing out Erin and encouraging his participation. For example, Ms. R asked Erin to read. When he stumbled, she gently prompted him. "Now continue reading and try to put a little more feeling in your voice." Erin reads further. "Good, keep working on that good expression." Due to Ms. R's positive and proactive approach, he was more verbal, participated more and in more active ways, and was experiencing success in the classroom.

In another classroom, the special education paraprofessional comes in to support a few students. Although Leroy and Erin seem to need the most support, she worked with them in a reading group with two other peers. They opened the book and read aloud at times using individual reading and at other times using choral reading. They discussed whether the main character sounded like he liked his Uncle Max. "What do you need to change in this last question, then?" Ms. M. engaged all four students in a discussion on question 4, and what the story said that related to Uncle Max. Then they discussed how the boy in the book acted. Ms. M. looked over their answers and congratulated the four on how well they were working independently. Ms. M. also provided some useful and positive support for this small group.

There are many other examples to illustrate this finding, but sometimes the students are the ones to capture the true essence of a finding. After all, they are the one's who experience the support or lack of it. One young boy shared the following during the researcher's interview with him. "I like my teacher. They are very nice. A good teacher plans ahead. You should always line up very quietly. (He related a rule about lining up, called the quiet body, five-finger rule.) We have nice a principal, too." This student expresses his perspective on two proactive strategies that he has experienced and feels are important. He further states that he feels cared about and supported by his teachers and principal.

Finding 5: Inclusion promotes the natural distribution of students.

As stated earlier, there are only 15 students with identified disabilities in the school, yet there are many other who experience Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or who have needs, but have not qualified for special education. These students have been naturally distributed among the grade level classrooms. There was no indication that the

practice of clustering students with needs into one grade level classroom was being implemented. In the multi-age classroom, there were students with speech/language needs, students with attention deficit disorder, and other students some of who received a fair amount of assistance from the STEP program. In a first-grade classroom, there was one student with a learning disability and a couple of students with speech/language needs among their general education, non-disabled peers. In a fourth-grade classroom there were a couple of students with ADHD, one who experiences emotional disabilities and a student with a hearing impairment as well as their non-disabled classmates. Therefore, based on the data, Lincoln Elementary believes in and implemented the natural distribution of students with disabilities among their general education peers.

Principle 3: Teach and Adapt for Diversity

The third principle of Whole Schooling promotes the philosophy and practice of designing instruction for diverse learners that engage them in active learning in meaningful, real-world activities. One method for supporting this principle is by developing accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities. The following findings and examples illustrate how Frank Elementary implements this principle.

Finding 1: Instructional practices are responsive to learner's needs, interests and abilities.

This finding was very strong. A great variety of situations demonstrated this. First, the STEP program is the school-based structure for responding to the individual needs of all of the students. With a flexible weekly schedule, the curriculum coming from the general education classroom, and additional opportunities for intense or specialized programming (e.g., Reading Recovery) to accommodate those who need it, this overall program is designed to respond to individual learner's needs.

Another curricular practice that was implemented through many classrooms was the use of literature-based differentiated instruction. Level reading was used to accomplish this. When using level reading, students choose books that are of interest to them and are at their independent reading level. At times, students work together with a partner or in small groups. They also can listen to books on tape and follow along in the storybook. Students were allowed to read in a variety of places including their desk, carpet area, loft area, etc. The books were arranged by level in tubs within the classroom and the levels were labeled by letters. Each tub contained a variety of topics and a large number of books to choose from. As the children engage in independent and partner reading, the classroom teacher conferences with one student at a time to listen to assess the child's fluency, comprehension, and reading level. The teacher works with each student every at least every 2 weeks. When assessing each student every two weeks, the child reads aloud to the teacher and is asked comprehension questions about the story while the teacher takes notes on the running record sheet and instructional reading record.

In addition, teachers use the Cunningham method for reading and language arts. During several observations, students were doing word wall activities and practicing spelling the words for the week. One child wrote a word on an overhead. Then she called on others to say the letters. Finally, the child would choose an exercise (such as crab walk, bridges) to do while they recited the letters to the word wall word. Ms. B. stated that Ethan (a child with disabilities) had made tremendous progress and she believes he may actually be gifted and just frustrated by the mechanics of the writing and reading. The word wall activities were very helpful for Ethan and were a common practice in the first grade. The students led the instruction and were quite actively engaged throughout the word wall activities. One of the students made this comment during the researcher's interview with him. "Well, I don't like recess, recess isn't my thing. What I do like is work. Knowledge is power. I am getting smarter and smarter every year. The thing that helps me is teachers that help me be a better reader. The teachers are very nice people. I don't need extra help this year, because I am getting smarter every year."

At times, there are children in the kindergarten classrooms that are ready to do higher-level work. In order to be responsive to their needs, these children spend half of their day in kindergarten and the other half in the 1-2 multi-grade unit. As one teacher in the building stated, "The staff are very child-centered. The principal always says to do what is in the best interest of the kids, which is how programming is decided." This is another example of responding to what is in each child's best interests.

Instructional practices were responsive to students' needs, interests and abilities at the upper elementary grade levels also. When one of the teachers was asked how she accommodates so many interests and abilities, she stated, "I make sure that when there is a whole group lesson, it is presented in different ways. Many of the kids are visual learners, so I use an overhead and manipulative so they can feel and move things. I double-check with them to be sure they are understanding. I do like them to explain even when a concept is difficult, I have them do think alouds. I think it is going very well. For example, we have heterogeneous groups for math. I have dynapacks and enrichment packets and other higher-level math skills that are available to all of the kids." In addition, two of the students were doing advanced math and there are two girls who do their math at the middle school.

Opportunities for differentiated curriculum and instruction were also available in reading and language arts at the upper grade levels. For example, some of the kids read longer chapter books for their Black History Month biography project. Other children read simpler books for their biographies. The class also read "Stone Fox." Some read it independently; some read it with modifications, while others listened to the book on tape. They each did a project and presentation on this book. Some did Venn diagrams of the characters, others wrote the next chapter, while others did posters. In another curricular unit, students were studying inventors. Students read from a variety of articles to collect facts about the inventor they picked to present. All of the students were given a graphic organizer to organize their ideas and facts. Students were able to move around the room to get materials or work on the floor. The activity let the students use their creativity,

work together with classmates, develop collaboration skills and facilitated in-depth learning.

Counter examples to this finding were very limited, but one that is important to bring forth came from a parent interview. "Some things could be changed to be more responsive to student needs. For one, the early reading program worked very well for Shawn in kindergarten, and it should be expanded to longer than six weeks. He was really benefiting from it, and then his time ended. Another idea is to have tutors after school at the school or in the area that would supplement the school program. I had done that on my own with Shawn last year and it was successful." This parent brings up some ideas that may be needed by other students as well and should not be forgotten.

Finding 2: Motivating instruction reduces the need for individual accommodations.

When instruction is responsive to students' interests, abilities and needs, it is usually also motivating and accommodating for the children. Consequently, many of the examples just read also pertain to this finding. The ability of so many teachers to motivate and maintain engagement during instruction at different grade levels reduces the need for many individual accommodations that would need to be made. That doesn't mean that no accommodations are needed for certain students, however fewer modifications are necessary when the instruction is initially planned in a differentiated and motivating format.

When interviewing a teacher about the reading curriculum, she stated, "It's based on the Cunningham model and uses leveled books and making words as key components. Students enjoy choosing their own books and reading at their interest and independent level. Writing is part of the class too. There are very few worksheets which the kids don't like and often need to be modified for certain students when they are used."

Many skilled teachers taught motivating lessons and used positive reinforcement. The students appeared to be quite engaged and very excited about learning. Ms. R's students were reading "James and the Giant Peach" as their classroom read aloud. First they were reading the book, then they will see the play, and finally they will watch the movie. They said they really liked the story from their daily class read aloud. It was evident given that the students were raising their hands high and saying, "oh, oh, I know." Even the students with disabilities and lower level readers appeared to be VERY engaged in this story and eager to contribute to the discussion. In addition, Ms. R. keeps their attention with positive reinforcement stating, "Tell me more and speak a little louder because this is very important." Also, "Your answers are very good! You are really reading very nicely, and bringing meaning to it."

Two additional examples of this finding are as follows. First Ms. R's class was working on graphing the pounds of chocolate eaten per person each year. Mrs. R: "It would be interesting to keep track how much you eat each day just for a month, wouldn't it? How would you do that?" The students quite motivated by the project and came up with

various ways to chart the data. In another example, four girls had done a skit based on the book Peppermints in the Park that the class just finished. They videotaped their skit and brought it in to show the class. Not only were the girls motivated in the book enough to perform and tape this skit, but also their classmates were also eager to watch it.

When some of the younger students were asked about what they found to be motivating, one said, "I have two favorite subjects actually, art and gym. We can make cool stuff in art and we do new games in gym." The other student said, "Last year I used to loved art. I love gym. I took Tai Kwon Do last year. I hate toys because they make a mess. I like neat things." Their comments remind us that the arts and fitness should not be left out when addressing a finding such as this.

Finding 3: "Authentic" curriculum and instructional practices are implemented (Authentic: Involving the construction of knowledge; disciplined inquiry; value beyond school).

Generally, that curricula which students find to be motivating and responsive to their needs and interests is also useful and authentic in some form. Consequently many of the examples already stated in the first two findings also fit under finding three. There were a few additional examples that will be shared here.

During one observation in Ms. B's 1-2 multi-grade classroom, the student were in small groups of three, rehearsing nursery rhymes that they would be presenting to a infant, (Ms. B nephew) the next day when the infant would be visiting their class.   The students had the choice to read, sing, or perform a skit with the rhyme. They found great meaning and use for this lesson.

In another primary classroom, students were collecting and counting pennies as a class activity. As each student put his/her pennies in the jar, the class would chorally count. The collection was to fund the proposed courtyard renovation. Ms. B recorded the new total on the board and turned the activity into a math problem-solving problem. Who can tell me how many more we need to make our goal?" During an interview, a young student shared the following, "Learning is important since I am going to have to pay a lot of money at stores, I would have to count the money to see if it is enough. Instead of giving and asking, you can count for yourself. You are probably adding more than taking away. My dad is telling me to save money for when I am a grownup." This student certainly found the authenticity in this activity.

Finding 4:   Instructional practices integrate curriculum.

There are a few examples of this finding that have not yet been described in similar overlapping findings. To link reading and social studies skills, one grade level did a book study on pioneers. One class read Caddie Woodlawn, another read Little House in the Big Woods, and the third class read The Courage of Sarah Noble. To link writing to social studies, the students were expected to write a letter to a lumberjack based on the

social studies unit being studied. They earned a grade for social studies content and a grade for writing. The writing piece was based on a conference that the teachers attended on the five types of writing. To link reading and writing, the students used the compare/contrast writing type with the story they read, Stone Fox." They were expected to compare and contrast the book with the movie, using at least 8 sentences with correct punctuation and grammar. Finally, one class was studying the Caribbean in their homeroom class and decided to wear costumes and have a Caribbean vacation at school for one day. These are a few additional lessons that integrated different content areas.

Finding 5: School staff implement a number of major determiners of learning, including: small class size, high expectations, time on task, accountability, effective management strategies, predictability, structure and routine, high attendance and participation rates, and relevant curriculum.

One of the main determiners of learning that was looked at in each of the research schools was class size. Class sizes are fairly small in all of the classrooms at Lincoln Elementary. Class sizes ranged from 19-22 students. Given transfers in and out of school throughout the year, that range may vary a big to higher or slightly lower numbers. Small class sizes are one factor that allowed the staff to really attend to student needs and interests.

Through interviews and observations, other determiners of learning were demonstrated. First, there was a high degree of time on task in the majority of classrooms. Teachers used every instructional moment possible.

Second, teachers held high expectation for themselves and their students. Throughout the first Whole Schooling Principle, teacher talked about staying until 9:00 at night to work and prepare, reading and attending conferences to stay abreast of new ideas and curriculum, and the high degree of stress they feel due to the expectations they place on themselves and the expectations of others. One teacher shared the following, "The teachers feel so responsible to the principal, the school board, and the state. They want to see and know that what they already do helps kids with disabilities. We are doing some of the best practices, but we always want to know what else we can do." Ms. R had a student with emotional disabilities in her class. She stated, "I hold high expectations for Trevor, but he even with resistance, he meets those expectations. Ms. B. calls on Ethan and Roger (two students with special needs) as much as she calls on the other students. There are also high expectations for parent involvement. Ms. B explained, "Every night the children have to read with their parents and the parents needs to initial it every day. If they don't read at night, they have to stay in from recess and read because they have to read every day. Some parents don't like this, but ultimately it is their decision. I put a note in the child's file stating that the parents prefers they go out to recess instead of read. I don't want someone asking me later why I didn't teach their child to read. So, ultimately the parent decides."

Third, Teachers use structure, predictability and routine to increase learning. Ms B stated, "Kids need routine. They learn better when they know what's coming next." Ms. R added, "Students need to know what is expected. We outline their accomplishments and determine what is needed next. I believe in building skills and we keep building upon the prior knowledge and connecting knowledge an skills."

Fourth, teachers hold students accountable for learning. "My instruction incorporates really active student involvement. I believe in holding them accountable. I have the kids do a lot of reflecting and explaining either orally or in the written form. I tend to be a teacher who practices a lot of explicit instruction in the beginning of the lesson and then branches off so that the kids take the ownership for their work. I try to make sure that those who need higher-level material are challenged. "

These examples are a few that emerged from the data to support this finding. Teachers have small class-sizes. They hold high expectations. They also hold students accountable for their own learning. They build in structure, predictability and routine and they maximize the use of the instructional time they have. The staff is to be commended on all that they do to promote student progress at Lincoln.

Finding 6: The Curriculum Focuses on District and State-wide testing.

Currently, there is a strong focus on district and state-wide assessment across Wisconsin and the rest of the United States. How much of the daily curriculum focuses on preparing for these tests? In some schools it is an obsessions and in others it doesn't seem to have changed instructional practices. As Lincoln Elementary, there were some comments and practices that are done due to the current focus on testing.

Ms. O and her co-teacher teach one of the multi-grade units. They feel the need to split the students into grade-levels groups for reading and math due to concerns over covering the necessary curriculum in order for the students to be successful on the district and state-wide assessments. They commented that they would prefer not to do this grouping because it goes against the purpose of having a multi-grade unit. Due to the statewide assessment demands, the multi-age units were disbanded the next year. Mr. Taylor shared his concerns about this, "It was a low day for me when we lost the mixed age. We had a lot of what Jonathon Kozol talks about with joy in the classroom in those mixed age rooms, but the political climate was such that the state curriculum and standards dismantled that."

When interviewing another teacher regarding curriculum in general, she stated, "The bottom line is still the district test, which is hard to get beyond that sometimes." This is difficult for some of the children with disabilities and other special needs as well. During testing in one classroom, Ethan, one of the students with special needs experienced distress as he struggled with the reading test. He was upset and not calming himself down well. His teacher was monitoring the class when Ethan began crying and getting more distraught. Brenda went over to Ethan to help him and Roger asked Ethan why he was crying. There was a brief and supportive between Roger and Ethan and Brenda

returned to her desk. Ethan freezes when under pressure to read, even on things he usually can read. This was heartbreaking and heartening to watch this brief encounter. Ethan feels such pressure that he is brought to tears. Yet, his classmates were so concerned and supportive and demonstrated that concern for Ethan.

It is unfortunate that practices such as the multi-grade units were so negatively influenced by the statewide assessment movement. There are certainly pros and cons to high stakes testing. Lincoln, like other schools will struggle to maintain those practices, which they know and believe to be good for kids with the political climate that Mr. Taylor referred to. This school is not alone.

Principle 4: Build Community & Support Learning

Principle four focuses on the school's practices for building an effective and supportive learning community. This often requires the use of specialized school and community resources (e.g., special education, Title 1, gifted education) to build support for students, parents, and teachers. This principle also focuses on building community and mutual support within the classroom. Finally, providing proactive supports for students with behavioral challenges is a necessary ingredient. The following findings and examples illustrate Lincoln Elementary's commitment to principle four.

Finding 1: The creative use of available time, staff, parents, and peers benefits and supports ALL students.

Once again the Student Tutoring Extension Program (STEP) is a good examples of the creative use of school-based staff specialists as a support for all students in the school. When the STEP staff is providing in-class support, they work with any child who may need help. For example, researchers observed Ms. M moving around the classroom checking student progress and assisting students in the same manner as the classroom teacher is monitoring student progress and assisting children as needed. Based on the curriculum and needs of all of the students at Lincoln, the schedule for support from the specialists changes each week. Therefore, the flexible and creative use of time for the specialists has also been a factor that has made this program beneficial for the students.

Various STEP staff also join grade-level teams for weekly planning meetings as well. As a member of the grade-level planning teams, the specialist are aware of upcoming curriculum and the team can discuss needed modifications for various students. Often times, modifications that need to be made for one student are also useful for others. Therefore, the STEP program and staff are the primary example of this finding.

Some of the teachers also use peer in supportive ways. For example, Ms. R uses a lot of cooperative groups and partner arrangements to capitalize on student learning and peer support. Other classroom teachers do the same. The multi-grade units used peers across grade or age levels as supports to each other as reading partners and in other curricular areas. Ms. B also used reading partners, cooperative grouping and student-led instruction

to further individual student learning in peer-supported ways. Based on the observational data, peer supports were used extensively at many classrooms.

Parents are also used is creative and supportive ways. There are many parents who take an active role in the Lincoln community. Some parents came in to assist the fourth graders in preparing for the popcorn sales. Other parents serve on school-wide committees. Based more on interview data, it appears that parents as a whole are quite involved in a number of different roles at Lincoln.

Finding 2: Peers serve as natural supports for their classmates.

Some of the examples to support this finding have already been described in other findings. In finding one above, peers are often used as a natural supports for their classmates through the use of instruction methods such as cooperative grouping, partner reading and student-led instruction. Students have shown concern for one another in an effort to be supportive, such as the example of Brenda and Roger who provided comfort and words of encouragement to Ethan during a stressful testing situation. There was also the example of the fourth-grade boys who reached out to their classmate with emotional disabilities who had recently returned from a hospital stay. Yet, there are additional examples to support this finding at Lincoln Elementary.

During one observation in Ms. B's classroom, Shawn entered the classroom after Reading instruction had already began. He joined a pair of female classmates who were working together. The girls quickly helped him locate the part in the story where they were reading. Hannah, (one of the girls) helped Shawn to sound out words that he struggled with. Both girls were very patient in listening to Shawn read his parts since he was a much slower reader than either of them. After the reading, the three worked together on their story map. Before recess, students worked together in partners to make words from their word chunk patterns.

Across classrooms, students were observed working together and naturally supporting each other. Ethan asked for help from a girl at the next table and she willingly offered him the assistance to progress with his work. Erin (a student with disabilities) worked with Julie and one other girl during reading because they were focused and willing to help him with decoding strategies When he needed the help. These interactions were common to see throughout the year and a half of observations at Lincoln.

During another observation, Ms. R's class just finished reading a play called, "Warm Fuzzy." Ms. R. gave the students instructions on how to design their own warm fuzzies for each of their classmates. The students were working on this at their desks, which are clustered in twos. Ms. R. addressed the students, "I waited until we were in school for a month before doing this because I wanted you to get to know each other a bit first. I want you to say something unique to each of your classmates, such as: "Thank you for smiling at me this morning because I wasn't having a very good day." Instead of saying, I think you are nice." The children also wrote a warm fuzzy to themselves. They were very excited about this activity and when the bell rang for recess, many didn't want to go out

because they wanted to keep working on the warm fuzzy assignment. This appeared to be an excellent activity for building peer support and building individual self-esteem.

There were few counter examples to this finding. At times, students would complain about other students bothering them while trying to work or students would interrupt other students during show and tell time. Obviously these were not occasions where peers were showing support for each other. Finally, one comment that was made during a student interview with a child who has special needs should also be included. "I don't like being bossed around by bigger kids and kids that don't like me. They are older and should not be bothering me." It is important that we listen to the children and the Lincoln staff may use these counter examples as motivating force to create even more proactive ways to build cross-age peer support.

Finding 3: Whole Schools provide positive, proactive supports to manage behaviors.

Managing behaviors is an ongoing struggle in most classrooms and schools. The challenge to the staff is to develop and implement positive and proactive strategies to minimize and change inappropriate behaviors that interfere with the learning process. The staff at Lincoln used some novel strategies to build natural peer supports as a strategy for supporting student's individual needs as well as managing behavior by creating more opportunities for positive interactions among children. The staff at Lincoln routinely and effectively used many long-standing management strategies. Positive reinforcement and reassurance were used a great deal. Here are some of the many examples of positive phrases said to the students.

> "Class, look at what Mark did (holding his work up). This is such a cute idea."
> "Everybody has their book? This is good. It makes me happy and probably makes you happy too."
> "Excellent job, Roger. I am very proud of you."
> "I like seeing people going back and reading what they have written to be sure it's right. That's a good strategy."
> "I just noticed something that Roger did that was excellent. "Roger put the word 'two' instead of the number.
> "I love hearing this excellent reading!"
> "I see some hard workers here."
> "That is really excellent, Ethan!"
> "I heard you did a really excellent job."

Many teachers were also skilled in using some form of redirection as a positive management strategy.

> "You are sitting and staring, Nate! Andy, buddy, you are just sitting there! This could be real problem when it comes time to get finished."

(Directed to the class) "I hate it that we have to move out of teams. "Mostly I am moving you because of the talking. So if you show me that you can be quiet, then maybe we can move back into teams."

The next time I see that (referring to a toy), it's going to go in the June box and you won't get it back until June. So I would take it out in the hall and put it away right now."

When looking at the poster of consequences and rewards in one teacher's room, it was nice to see that she focuses on rewards that develop individual self-esteem. Some of the rewards listed were positive notes, surprises, good feelings, and self-management skills. The focus is on the intrinsic value of learning as well as some extrinsic reinforcers.

Teachers were also positively and proactively supporting and managing student behaviors by engaging them in interesting and relevant curriculum, and making themselves available outside of class time when needed. One teacher addressed the class with, "If you have questions, I am always available to help you sort things out and maybe do some practice."

Students and parents also commented on ways that teachers at Lincoln have been positive and proactive in supporting students. One parent stated, "Some of the teacher have personalities that are very accepting that my child has a special need, and don't try to change him, but adapted to the way he learns. He had so much respect for the teacher that he was willing to do things I wouldn't have expected. All kids do better with positive reinforcement." Another parent added, "The staff do make changes every year and they seem to be on top of what the kids need." She went on to give examples of the staff trying things in 4th grade last year to get the kids ready for 5th at the middle school. Finally, one of the students shared his perspective on this finding. "The teachers help my brother by watching him and watching me too. If we can't get something, we can ask and they help us. We three have trouble with things. I have trouble with the cursive. I don't know what they have trouble with, that's their business. When I go higher I get smarter. I won't go lower unless I stay in the same class next year."

In conclusion, these findings and supporting examples illustrate how Lincoln Elementary is building community and supporting learning. In general, Lincoln lives out this principal on a daily basis throughout the school. Staff should be encouraged by their success in this area while continuing to think about and implement additional ways of further building the Lincoln Community and supporting the learning of each and every child.

Principle 5: Partnering

The last principle of Whole Schooling is Partnering. This principle requires that school build genuine collaborative relationships within the school and with families and the community. It further promotes that schools take an active role in strengthening the community as well as providing guidance to engage students, parents, teachers and others

in decision-making and the direction of learning and school activities. Frank Elementary exemplifies this principle in concrete ways that will be described below.

Finding 1: Joining together with families, community members and university faculty mutually benefits all.

Many of the staff at Lincoln, like staff in the other Whole Schooling Research Project schools, seem to be hungry to learn from and share new information, knowledge, curriculum and ideas with colleagues. It should be no surprise that this is one of the reasons why Lincoln is involved in this research project.

As discussed in the last principle, parents are quite involved in the school. During observations, mothers were coming to help the fourth-graders make and sell popcorn for a fieldtrip fundraiser. One child's grandmother is a writer and she came in to talk to the class about the writing process. Mr. Taylor stated, "We have a very active parent organization. They take the parent survey information that we collect twice year and help us use that to form our goals for that each year. We have 275 parent volunteers a year doing various things at Lincoln."

A question that arises under this first finding is this. Does the Lincoln staff also look to neighborhood and community members as resources to benefit the children and give them a broader range of opportunities and connections to their greater community? Research data did include any examples to demonstrate the involvement of community members who are not parents or grandparents of children in the school. This would be a good area for further development that would benefit the Lincoln students, support the teaching staff and be valuable for the volunteers as well.

Finding 2: Collaboration and Co-Teaching strengthen the overall school community and learning experiences.

It takes a high degree of collaboration for the entire Student Tutoring Extension program to operate smoothly. Since this was described in detail earlier, it will not be described here again. STEP specialists collaborate and co-plan with grade-level teaching teams, therapists and parents. The multi-grade units were also examples of using collaboration and co-teaching to strengthen the programming offered to students at Lincoln. Multi-grade units had been in existence for 5 years. Observational data included examples of occupational therapists working with teachers right in the classroom setting to serve students with special needs. During interviews teachers were asked how they collaborate with others in the school. One teacher stated, "I am a creature of my age group. I know collaborative teaching is better, and I try and I am improving, but I am a creature of habit and I was trained to teach alone. I do better collaborating with the younger teachers than the teachers my age. This is one reason I take student teachers. I also learn a lot from the student teachers." It is also important to remember that collaboration occurs with university students as well.

During an interview, one parent commented, "I am not sure the classroom teacher and the special education teachers are always in sync. They have always figured out a way to compromise and they usually resolve things that they have differences on." This parent brings up a concern with the collaboration between teachers, but also sees how collaborative the staff can be when differences arise.

Finally, interview data also revealed some concerns with some teachers who appear reluctant to collaborate or implement changes for individual children. This is an area for further development with some of the staff at Lincoln. When good collaboration occurs, children benefit tremendously. The more staff who willingly or eagerly collaborate, the greater the benefits to the entire student body.

Finding 3: Parents and students feel supported by school staff.

Previous principles and their corresponding findings also hold valuable examples to support this finding. However, a few additional examples are unique to this finding and illustrate the support that parents and students feel from the Lincoln Elementary staff.

A parent shared the following, "I am perfectly happy with this school. The school staff is easy to communicate with. People are easy and ready to talk with about any problems. Ms. B was very easy to work with. She brought the problem out in the class and made it so every one worked with Shawn instead of separating him." Another parent responded, "First of all the principal is very supportive and is very involved with the teachers. He is very hands-on with the teachers. He has the support of all the teachers. There are a lot of positive things. The teachers are great. They stand behind the principal. I also like that they try to get parents involved as much at they (the parents) want." Finally, another parent comment was, "Anything that I have had trouble with I have either gone directly to the teacher or Mr. Taylor and it has been taken care of immediately."

There were also some concerns from parents and teachers regarding this finding. One teacher stated, "Teachers need to work more with each other, within teams, and to collaborate more." Another teacher shared, "I wish I had time to meet and collaborate with other teachers, but the schedules don't allow it. I think the collaboration needs improvement because I think the teachers don't think they get enough support and time for collaboration. I do think it is better than it has been in some years." Parents also shared their comments. **"**My husband doesn't like this system. He doesn't think Shawn is getting enough help or progressing fast enough, but I see it as a longer process than he does." Finally, "I don't feel that my son's classroom teacher is giving him any extra help. The teacher says that if he is lost he can ask his partner, but he is not always comfortable asking his partner. Things are not going as smoothly this year. She is not watching the kids that need extra help as much as necessary. She needs to pay extra attention to those kids. I think she is probably pretty set in her ways. I don't know if my on is comfortable in there or not."

Based on these examples, it seems that parents and teachers are aware of the collaborative efforts and relationships that are present, but also express concern that this

is an area that should be improved further within the building. This would also be an excellent area for staff to focus on when setting up the school improvement committees and setting future goals.

Conclusions

When reviewing all of the research data, there were some additional items that emerged and warrant further discussion and investigation. First, a few of the teachers stated that they would like someone to go through and evaluate their teaching and give suggestions for further improvement. One stated, "I would like some feedback on current practices and I would like suggestions."   Another added, "We would be very interested in Best practices that we are using or that we should be using."   Second, the staff work so very hard and some feel the need for assurance that they are putting their efforts in the right direction. Third, teachers also expressed a need for time to collaborate and also to reflect in order to plan for the future. "We have a tendency to not have time to reflect on what we are doing and see how it needs to evolve next. The teachers here are truly fabulous and we all need help in evolving." These were some important points that shouldn't be missed. Finally, it has been a great privilege and pleasure to have Lincoln Elementary as a research site in this project. Thank you to Mr. Taylor and all of the teachers, parents and children for your patience and cooperation in this project. Others will benefit from your openness and good work.