**Mass insight**
education & research

# LINCOLN MIDDLE SCHOOL:
# School Readiness Assessment Final Report

## *Kansas City Public Schools Secondary and Signature School Reviews*

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| **Site Visit Date:** January 23, 2020<br><br>**Principal:** Mary Bachkora<br><br>**Mass Insight Team:** Andrea Wolfe, MJ Mathis, & Julie Shepherd | |

## School Readiness Assessment Purpose

Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) has partnered with Mass Insight Education & Research, a national non-profit, to conduct school reviews of all secondary and signature schools. The purpose of these reviews is to:
- Surface individual school successes, challenges, and opportunities to inform continuous improvement efforts; and
- Surface trends across secondary and signature schools to:
  - understand how secondary and signature options contribute to the overall experience and expectation of the KCPS community and help achieve KCPS' 5-Year Strategic Plan goals; and
  - inform the identification of systems-level changes and school supports.

Mass Insight's research-based School Readiness Assessment (SRA) supports and accelerates school improvement by informing the development of strong school improvement plans that address a school's highest needs, as well as informing district-level improvement to better meet the needs of students and schools. In alignment with the Mass Insight theory of action (described on page 4) and based on more than 10 years of national experience and research in the field of school improvement, Mass Insight has identified seven elements that we observe to drive school improvement and school readiness and ensure the success of all students. The SRA is structured to analyze the extent to which these elements are in place.

## School Readiness Assessment Process

The school review process follows three phases, including a comprehensive data/document review conducted prior to a campus visit; the on-site campus visit; and finally, analysis and report of findings.

| Phase | Potential Activities |
|---|---|
| **Pre-Site Visit** *(December 2019)* | <ul><li>Collect and review campus data and related documents to understand campus context, including principal, staff and student surveys.</li><li>Coordinate visit logistics to ensure a successful site visit.</li></ul> |
| **Site Visit** *(January 2020)* | <ul><li>Conduct interviews and focus groups with a variety of campus stakeholders (e.g. teachers, students, administrators, counselors, instructional coaches, families, etc.).</li><li>Classroom, hallway, and common space walkthroughs (observations may not occur on the same date as your site-visit interviews and focus groups).</li></ul> |
| **Post-Site Visit** *(January- February 2020)* | <ul><li>The site visit team synthesizes and analyzes visit findings that surface priority focus area recommendations.</li></ul> |

## Overview of the Findings Report

This report begins with a **Data Profile** - a high level quantitative overview of the school's current demographics, culture and climate indicators, and recent academic performance. Next is a summary of **Strengths and Challenges** - the most salient and resounding headlines from Mass Insight's time on campus. These are not arranged by any particular element and may represent a confluence of factors that can help the school begin to prioritize strengths and challenges to focus on following the site visit. Mass Insight will also provide action-oriented **Recommendations** for how the school can improve and where they might prioritize efforts first. This might also be used to inform the revision or creation of a School Improvement Plan. Finally, the Appendix contains the **School Readiness Assessment Tool**, which provides specific evidence gathered during the review process and a rating (described in the next section) for each feature of each element. This section can be useful for delving into more specific and granular details. Mass Insight does not suggest attempting to tackle every feature all at once.

## School Readiness Assessment Evidence and Rating System

Mass Insight's SRA Tool (included in Appendix) is designed to analyze the extent to which a school has elements of our theory of action in place, in relation to an exemplar description of each element (and the features that make up that element) at the highest performing schools. The Mass Insight team will use the SRA Tool to document evidence based on information gathered during the SRA activities to assign a rating for each feature. Ratings are designed to describe the extent to which evidence aligns to the exemplar descriptions at the highest performing schools. The features rated lowest do not necessarily mean that those features are in the most urgent need of attention; the recommendations describe what Mass Insight suggests addressing first.

| Rating Level Key: |
|---|
| **0: Not Meeting** (no, or extremely limited, evidence of this feature; work on this feature has not yet started) |
| **1: Somewhat Meets** (some evidence of implementation of this feature) |
| **2: Mostly Meets** (considerable evidence of implementation of this feature) |
| **3: Meets** (robust evidence of implementation of this feature) |

## About Mass Insight and Our Theory of Action

Mass Insight is a national non-profit organization committed to transforming public schools into high-performing organizations and closing achievement gaps. Since 2007, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies to redesign systems and establish the conditions and capacity for district and school improvement. As part of this work, Mass Insight has conducted numerous School Readiness Assessments (SRAs) across the country.

In 2007, Mass Insight published *The Turnaround Challenge*[1], a nationally-recognized research report and call to action that highlighted the need for intervention in America's lowest-performing schools. Since 2009, Mass Insight has worked with schools, districts, and state education agencies in Massachusetts and across the country to redesign the systems that support chronically underperforming schools and to drive gains in student achievement. Building from our research and more than ten years of experience in turnaround, we recently revisited Mass Insight's theory of action and identified seven theory of action elements that we believe must be in place to ensure schools are successful.

Mass Insight's SRA is structured to analyze the extent to which elements of our theory of action are in place in schools. We seek to understand what student outcome data reveals, analyze evidence and hypothesize why challenges and successes exist, and help schools prioritize where to focus next.

*We believe that if schools have:*
**Conditions:** Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money, and program to address the root causes of low performance;
**Planning:** Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance informed by a review of existing conditions and input from school, district, and community stakeholders;
**Leadership:** A principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities;
**Focus on Instruction:** Processes and supports that help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice so that students can engage in deep learning tasks;
**Collective Responsibility:** The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success;
**Performance Management:** Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve; and
**Partnerships:** Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students, *THEN schools will dramatically improve and student learning will increase.*



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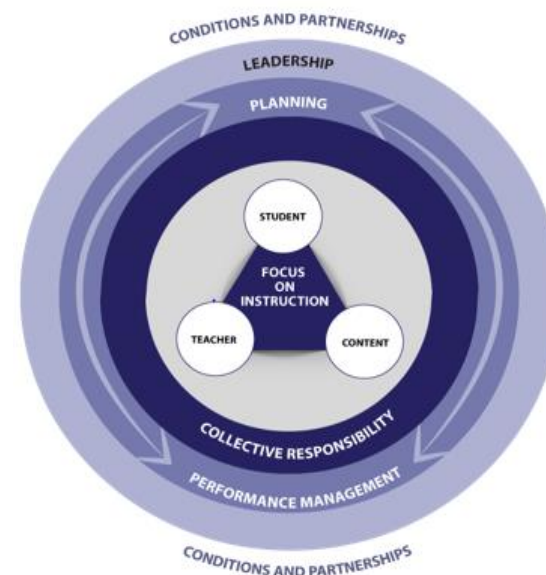
[1] *Mass Insight Education and Research*. Mass Insight Education and Research Institute, Inc., 2007, www.massinsight.org/resources/the-turnaround-challenge/

## Student Enrollment and Attendance

### Total Enrollment
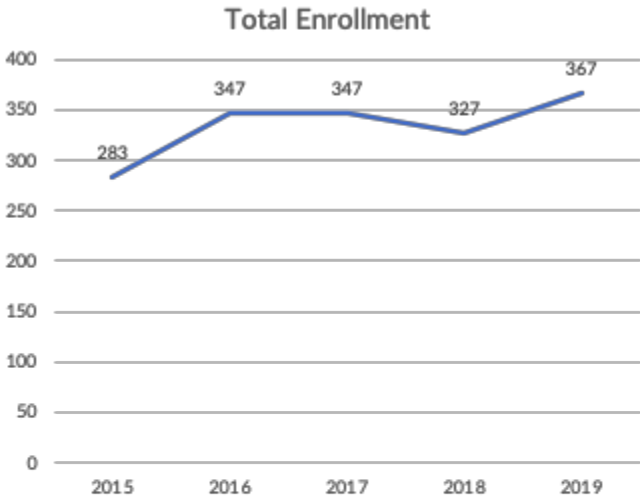


Student enrollment at Lincoln Middle School over the last 5 years has increased and was 84 students higher in 2019 than in 2015.

The majority of the student population is Black and Hispanic.

### Student Enrollment by Subgroup



■ 2015  ■ 2016  ■ 2017  ■ 2018  ■ 2019

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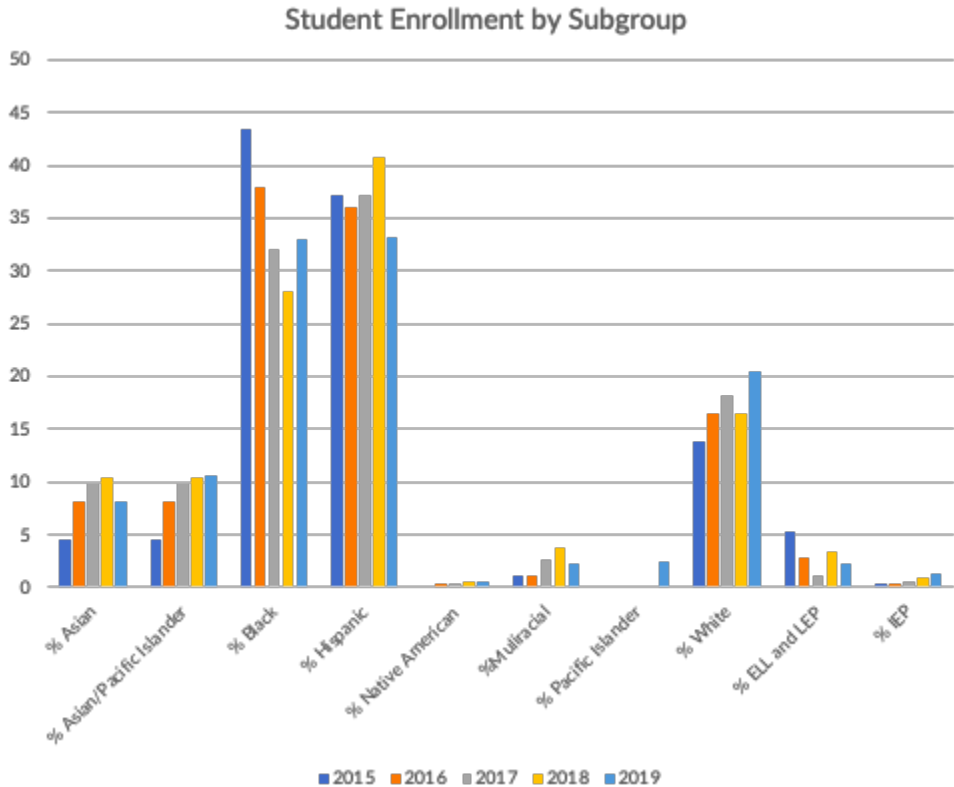
[2] Data contained within this data profile was publicly available on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website: https://dese.mo.gov/school-data

## Student Attendance Trend 2015-2019
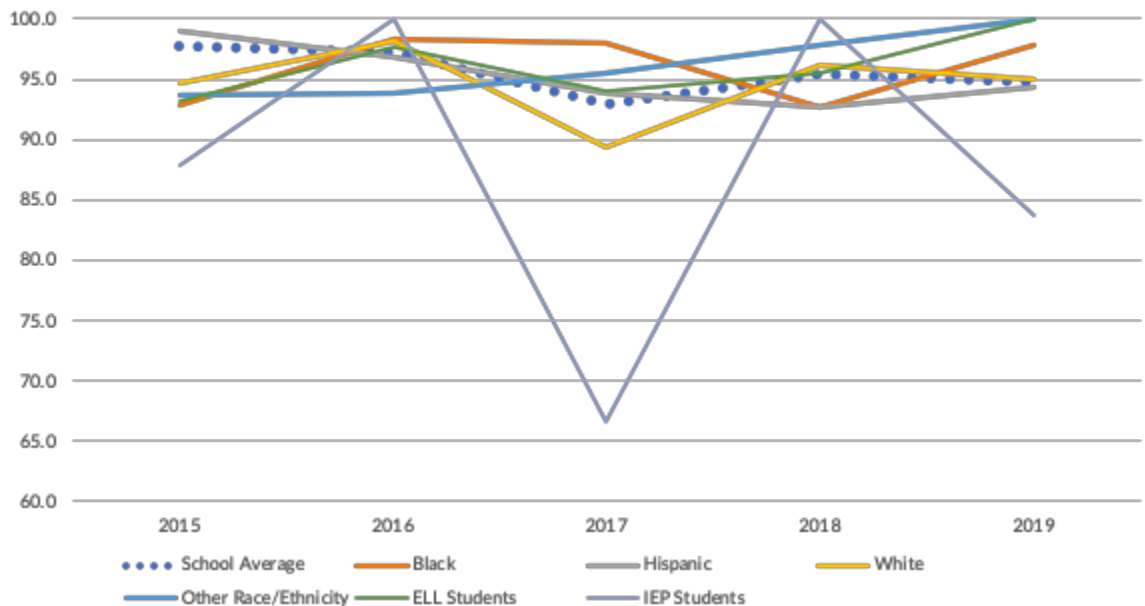


The proportional attendance rate for students at or above 90% (displayed in the graph to the left) in grades 6-8 at Lincoln Middle School was 94.75% in 2019.

The total proportional attendance rate last year at Lincoln Middle School was 96.3%.

| STUDENT MOBLITY | Fall Enrollment | Additional Enrollment | Transfers | Mobility Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2019 | 367 | 2 | 92 | 24.9 |

Student enrollment at Lincoln Middle School has increased by 20 students over the last 3 years. While few additional students enroll throughout the year, the number of transfers is high, resulting in a mobility rates around 25% during the 2019 SY. Historical student mobility data is unavailable due to the previous joint school configuration of Lincoln Middle School and Lincoln College Preparatory Academy.

## Student Discipline

| DISCIPLINE RATES | 2019 |
|---|---|
| Enrollment | 367 |
| Total Number of Incidents | 3 |
| Incident Rate (per 100 students) | 0.8 |
| **Type of Removal** | |
| In-School Suspension (number \| rate) | 0 \| 0.0 |
| Out of School Suspension (number \| rate) | 3 \| 0.8 |
| Expulsion (number \| rate) | 0 \| 0.0 |
| **Length of Removal** | |
| 10 Consecutive Days (number \| rate) | 3 \| 0.8 |
| More than 10 Consecutive Days (number \| rate) | 0 \| 0.0 |

The incident rate was 0.8% during the 2019 school year. The out of school suspension rate and rate of students expelled for 10 consecutive days were also 0.8%.

No transfer, mobility, or dropout rates were publicly available.

## Student Academic Performance

### 2019 School-wide MAP Results



Below Basic — Basic — Proficient — Advanced
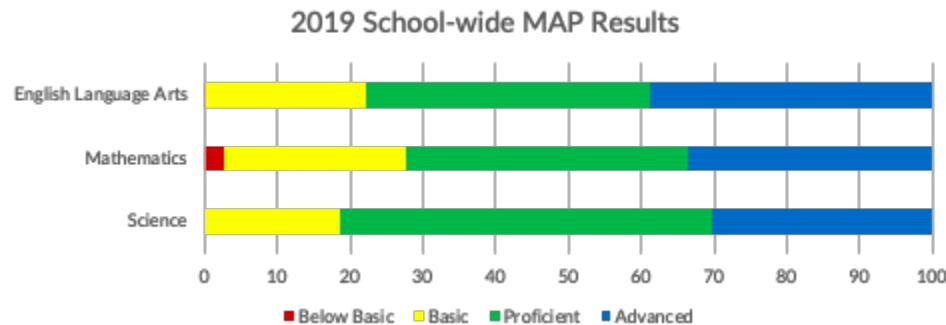
School-wide performance on MAP tests in 2019 showed 77.7% of students were proficient/advanced in English Language Arts, 72.4% were proficient/advanced in Mathematics, and 81.3% were advanced/proficient in Science.

## 6th Grade 2019 English Language Arts MAP Proficiency Rates



Legend: ■ Below Basic □ Basic ■ Proficient ■ Advanced
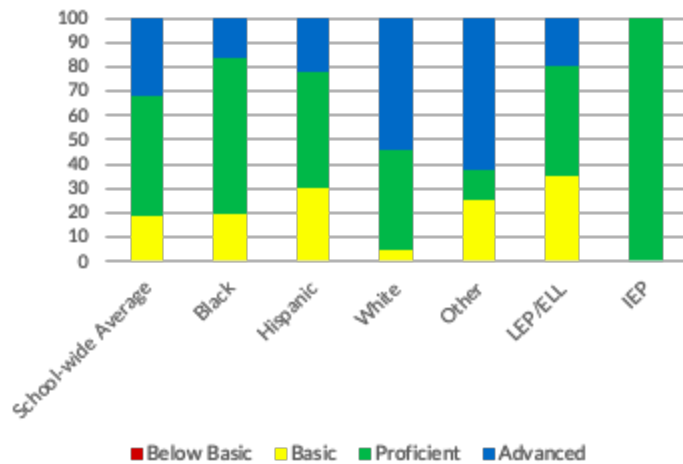
## 6th Grade 2019 Mathematics Proficiency Rates
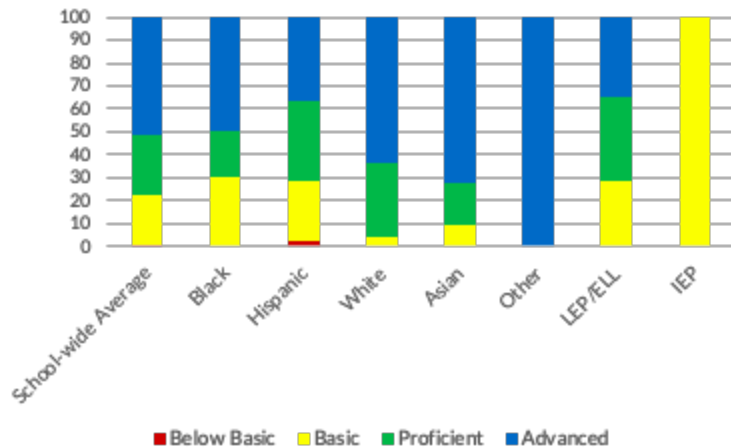


Legend: ■ Below Basic □ Basic ■ Proficient ■ Advanced
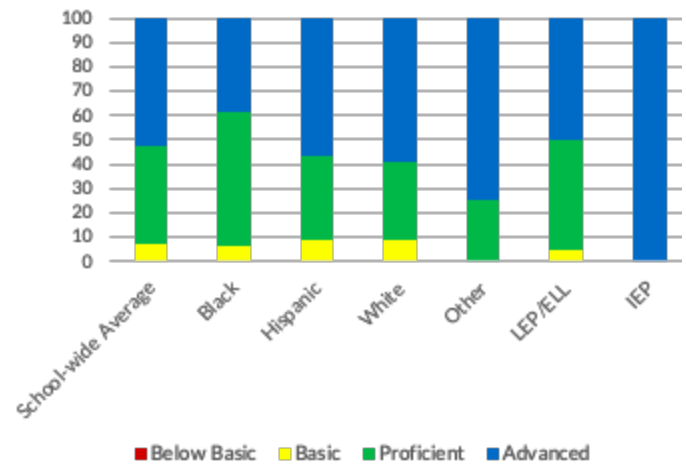
6th grade ELA MAP exams in 2019 showed 80.9% of students were proficient/advanced. 80.6% of Black students, 69.5% of Hispanic students, 95.5% of White students, 75% of other students, 65% of LEP/ELLs, and 100% of students with IEPs were proficient.

6th grade Mathematics MAP exams in 2019 showed 92.9% of students were proficient/advanced. 93.5% of Black students, 91.3% of Hispanic students, 90.9% of White students 100% of other students, 95% of LEP/ELLs, and 100% of students with IEPs were proficient.
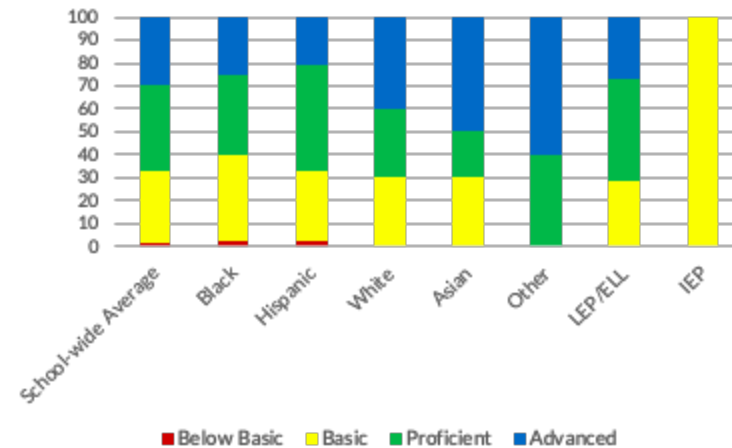
*Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.*

## 7th Grade 2019 English Language Arts Proficiency Rates

## 7th Grade 2019 Mathematics MAP Proficiency Rates



Legend: ■ Below Basic  □ Basic  ■ Proficient  ■ Advanced
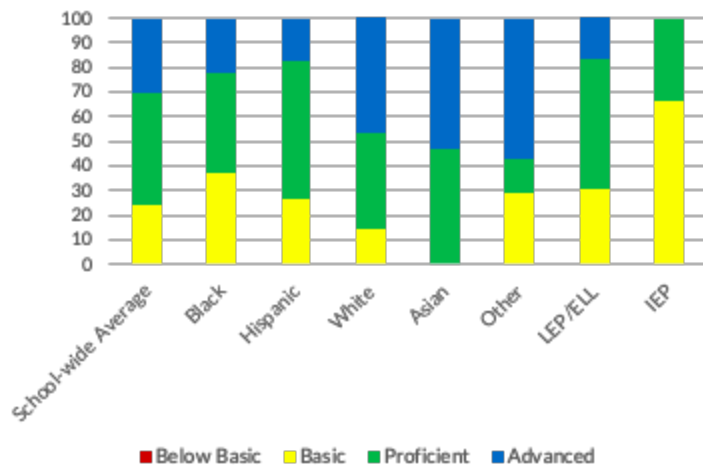
7th grade ELA MAP exams in 2019 showed 77.9% of students were proficient/advanced. 69.6% of Black students, 71.8% of Hispanic students, 95.5% of White students, 90.9% of Asian students, 100% of other students, and 71.8% of LEP/ELLs were proficient. No students with IEPs were proficient.

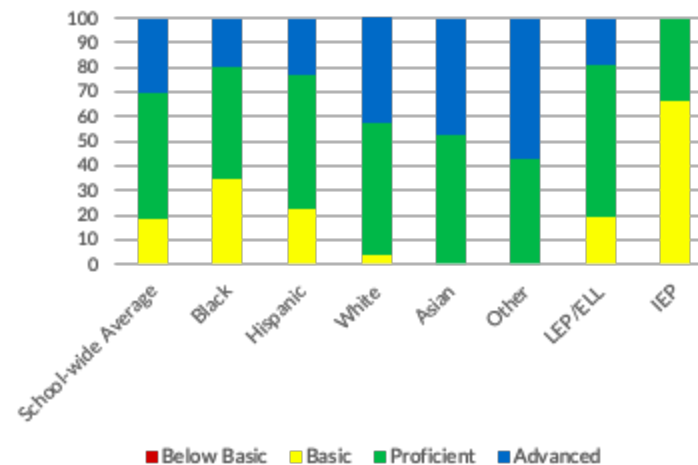7th grade Mathematics MAP exams in 2019 showed 67% of students were proficient/advanced. 60.5% of Black students, 67.4% of Hispanic students, 70% of White students, 70% of Asian students, 100% of other students, and 71.1% of LEP/ELL students were proficient. No students with IEPs were proficient.

Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.

## 8th Grade 2019 English Language Arts Proficiency Rates



## 8th Grade 2019 Science MAP Proficiency Rates



■ Below Basic   □ Basic   ■ Proficient   ■ Advanced

8th grade ELA MAP exams in 2019 showed 75.8% of students were proficient/advanced. 62.5% of Black students, 74.6% of Hispanic students, 85.9% of White students, 100% of Asian students, 70.4% of other students, 69.4% of LEP/ELLs, and 33.3% of students with IEPs were proficient.

8th grade Science MAP exams in 2019 showed 81.3% of students were advanced/proficient. 64% of Black students, 77.3% of Hispanic students, 96.7% of White students, 100% of Asian and other students, 81.1% of LEP/ELLs, and 33.3% of students with IEPs were proficient.

Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.

## 8th Grade 2019 Mathematics MAP Proficiency Rates



## 2019 Algebra 1 EOC MAP Proficiency Rates



8th grade Mathematics MAP exams in 2019 showed 47.6% of students were proficient/advanced. 66.7% of White students, 100% of other students, and 40% of LEP/ELLs were proficient. No Black students, Hispanic students, or students with IEPs were proficient.
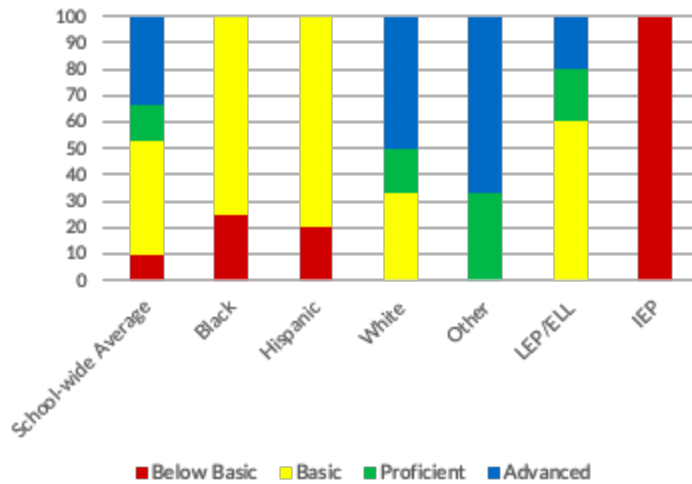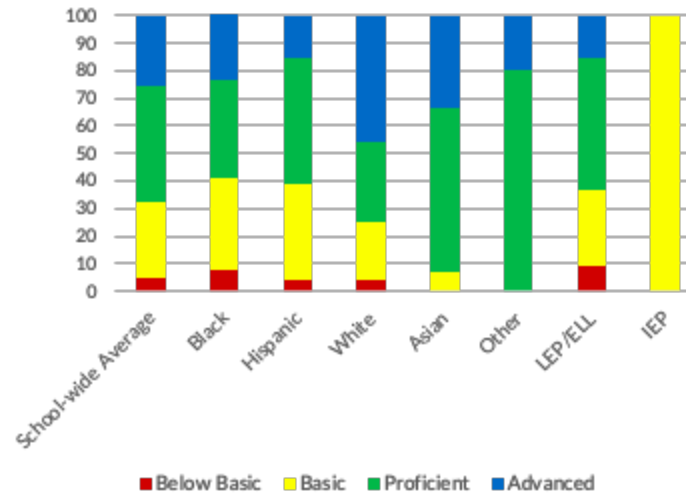
Algebra 1 EOC exams in 2019 showed 67.9% of students were proficient/ advanced. 61% of Black students, 60.8% of Hispanic students, 75% of White students, 93.3% of Asian students, 100% of other students, and 63.7% of LEP/ELLs were proficient. No students with IEPs were proficient.

Note: the "other" descriptor refers to a racial or ethnic subgroup or combined subgroup of fewer than 10 students.

**Strengths**

- **There is a growing sense of "one school" as the middle school has transitioned out of the high school and into its own building.** The 2019-2020 school year is the first  year for Lincoln Middle School to function as its own standalone school. In one semester the school has transitioned (with some growing pains) successfully into functioning as one team with clear systems and structures.

- **Stakeholders, from students to staff to families, recognize the work leadership has invested throughout this transition and the accomplishments achieved thus far.** Stakeholders recognize that a move into a new building requires establishing new systems, structures, and policies. With one full semester under the belt, stakeholders note that many systems from PBIS, to coaching, to PLCs are underway.

- **Stakeholder buy-in and engagement in the PBIS system is evident across the school and highlights a big leadership win.** Leadership convened stakeholders over the summer to develop PBIS matrices for every aspect of the school day from buses to hallways to classrooms. Students and staff are aligned on expectations across the school building which creates a consistent and rewarding experience for students.

**Challenges**

- **There is a lack of shared understanding amongst staff of what rigor and high-level instruction looks like at Lincoln.** When asked, staff were unable to provide a shared understanding for what rigorous instruction means or should look like at Lincoln Middle School. Staff indicate that it is often unclear what is expected of them in classrooms and can be a guessing game based on the type of feedback received.

- **There is inconsistency in staff buy-in and engagement in several high-leverage initiatives, specifically PLCs, classroom walkthroughs and professional development.** Though the school has implemented or begun implementation of new systems, there is an opportunity to increase focus on building staff buy in to the new initiatives.

- **Staff report a lack of time and structures to build trusting, collaborative relationships with each other.** Specifically, staff note that part of becoming one school requires additional time for staff to get to know each other, team build, and more authentically collaborate with one another. Though PLCs are underway, staff groupings and scheduling do not always allow for authentic collaboration within and across grade-level and content area teams.

1. **Develop a school-wide definition of high quality instruction that clearly outlines specific instructional expectations for teachers and learner expectations for students.** Teachers note that there is currently no shared definition of rigor or shared understanding of what rigorous instruction looks like; they also mention that while staff is all pulling in the same direction through a multitude of initiatives, no systems have been created to frame and align instructional practices campus wide. An instructional vision could help the school define how academically successful students engage in the learning process; how successful teachers develop students and their own professional practices and engage students in rigorous learning; how successful leaders support and develop teachers and students and their own professional practice; and how families support and develop their children and their engagement with the school. Creating an instructional vision will ensure that all stakeholders -- from students and families to teachers and leaders -- can speak to their own roles and responsibilities, the roles and responsibilities of others, and the focus on high-quality classroom experiences for students.

2. **Create a strategy for initiative roll-out that incorporates stakeholder voice and places milestones within the context of the larger vision.** Leadership at Lincoln College Prep Middle School has been very thoughtful in order to protect staff from information overload, while working to ensure they have enough context to move forward on shared goals. However, the lack of a unified improvement plan for the school creates a sense that individual initiatives (e.g., PLCs) are not part of a larger vision for improvement. Alignment to the school's instructional vision will ensure staff are invested in the initiatives that will improve supports for students and build clarity around their own development trajectory. Developing a feedback loop for staff will help leadership to keep a pulse on staff's understanding and investment in the school's plan.

# Appendix: School Readiness Assessment Tool

Mass Insight's SRA Tool is designed to analyze the extent to which a school has elements of our research-based theory of action in place, in relation to an exemplar description of each element (and the features that make up that element) at the highest performing schools. The Mass Insight team uses this SRA Tool to document evidence and analysis based on information gathered during the SRA activities to assign a rating for each feature. Ratings are designed to describe the extent to which evidence aligns to the exemplar descriptions at the highest performing schools.

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| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Focus on Instruction: Processes and systems help teachers work together to constantly improve and refine standards-based instructional practice, ensuring students engage in deep learning tasks.* | *School Model and Instructional Vision* <br> *Signature schools*: The school implements a clearly defined and observable school model that meets student interests and demand. <br><br> *Secondary schools*: The school implements clear pathways for student progression through high school to college and careers. <br><br> There is a clear instructional vision that aligns with the district-wide framework for critical thinking, problem-solving and cultural responsiveness for 21st Century learning, and the school model. It focuses on the success of all students, aligns with standards, and helps build an understanding of the actions that educators must take to accelerate student learning. The vision is widely understood and drives school decision-making. All teachers and administrators can describe how their work moves the school closer to meeting the vision. | 1: Somewhat Meets | <ul><li>This is the first year that Lincoln MS is split from the high school, and school leadership facilitated intentional vision setting with teachers and families prior to beginning the current school year in the new MS only building.</li><li>The college prep mission includes academic achievement and access to AP and honors classes, as well as social-emotional development through access to sports, clubs, extra-curriculars, etc.</li><li>While a school-wide vision has been set, it does not describe instructional expectations of teaching and learning.</li><li>Elements of a college prep school model are not observable in the building.</li></ul> |

| Focus on Instruction, continued. | **Readiness to Learn**<br>The school implements consistent, equitable, and asset-based policies, procedures, and practices that foster positive learning school experiences that validate all students' social-emotional and cultural identities. As a result, students feel safe, valued, cared for, challenged, and supported at school. Student and family needs are identified and connected with resources and services to ensure all students can self-regulate and engage in learning with agency. The school has programs, structures, and extracurricular activities (such as looping, advisory, morning meetings, intramurals, clubs) to expand and nurture students' sense of belonging and ensure that every student has enriching experiences and strong relationships with adults. | 3: Meets | <ul><li>100% of classrooms visited were physically and emotionally safe for students.</li><li>The building is new, bright and clean and students have access to new educational technology.</li><li>School stakeholders developed a Positive Behavior Incentive System (PBIS) matrix for all student experiences (e.g., classroom, auditorium, buses, etc.); signs outlining expectations are visible across the school.</li><li>Students report positive relationships with staff and the ability to ask for help at any time.</li><li>Students and staff report a number of clubs, sports, music and arts offerings.</li><li>Weekly advisory classes allow teachers to identify students who need more academic support.</li><li>The Problem Solving Team (PST) is made up of multiple school level stakeholders and supports students based on referrals.</li><li>There is an acknowledgement across stakeholders that there are specific social-emotional needs of high performing students the school can and should address.</li></ul> |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teacher Development & Feedback**<br>There are systems, structures, and practices that prioritize teacher development based on data and district priorities including trauma sensitive strategies. There are feedback cycles and follow-up. All teachers describe receiving frequent, consistent, coherent, and coordinated high-quality feedback on teaching that is grounded in an instructional vision and that will lead to accelerated learning for all students. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>The leadership team uses the district-wide walk-through form and electronic feedback system.</li><li>The majority of school staff share that this tool does not allow for consistent face-to-face feedback and feels less supportive for instructional development and more compliance-based.</li><li>Staff report that step-backs and targeted instructional coaching have been supportive of teacher growth, but not consistent.</li><li>57% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "I receive frequent, clear, and actionable feedback about my instructional practice that helps me improve."</li><li>Staff report that PD is well thought out and planned; there is an opportunity to differentiate PD and to</li></ul> |

| Focus on Instruction, continued. | | | • allow for more team building time and space for feedback.<br>• 57% of staff survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that "All forms of professional development (coaching, PD, observation/feedback) are coordinated and of high quality to improve my professional practice." |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Teacher Collaboration (PLCs)**<br>Teachers working in teams have time, systems and structures to maximize collaborative time in instructional teams (such as by grade level or content area). Teachers work towards commonly set and motivating goals that help all students progress towards the highest priority academic standards and improve critical thinking skills; these teams receive high-quality feedback and enjoy a trusting culture that includes open and constructive dialogue. | 2: Mostly Meets | • Currently, grade-level PLCs occur monthly, although stakeholders report inconsistency depending on weather (snow days) or availability of a leadership team member to join.<br>• Staff report working to align lessons to grade-level standards and Response to Intervention (RTI) structures within PLCs.<br>• Staff report a desire for more content area collaboration and vertical alignment across grade levels; leadership plans to provide content area time during Wednesday PLCs.<br>• Staff report a desire for more teacher leadership within PLCs.<br>• 57% of staff survey respondents agree, and another 7% strongly agree, that "There is a clear vision and purpose for PLCs at my school".<br>• 57% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "My PLC is a collaborative environment where all members of my PLC attend and actively participate in our meetings." |

| Focus on Instruction, continued. | **Curriculum, Standards & Assessment** Instructional work is guided by curricula and instructional resources (including technology) aligned to standards and aligned across and between grade levels. It is responsive to students' cultures, experiences, needs, and interests. Formative and externally-developed summative assessments are aligned with both standards and the sequence of instruction. These assessments yield frequent, accurate, and actionable data about student progress towards the highest priority standards. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>Teachers utilize district curriculum and assessments, including iReady, quizzes and exit tickets. Staff do not articulate using teacher-developed materials.</li><li>Staff note that there are varying levels of curriculum quality and support provided by the district. For example, limited quality and available resources for social studies, and stronger resources for science.</li><li>In addition, there is a science program called Project Lead the Way that was obtained through a grant.</li><li>Staff name that some district interim assessments through Achievement Series are more informative and rigorous than others. Staff noted multiple errors in the ELA assessments, and low rigor in social studies.</li><li>43% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "Our curriculum is responsive to the needs, identities, and backgrounds of our students."</li><li>50% of staff survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that "Summative/interim assessments yield accurate and actionable data about student progress toward standard mastery," and another 28% are not sure.</li></ul> |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Data-Driven Decision-Making for Classroom Instruction** The academic progress of all students is monitored by teachers and students. Systems, structures, and processes support teachers—individually and in teams (such as the Problem Solving Team (PST))—to frequently and routinely use a variety of student data, including disaggregated academic data, to pinpoint class and student needs. Data inquiry cycles drive on-going instructional decisions, including grouping, differentiation, enrichment, intervention, and personalized plans for meeting graduation requirements. | 1: Somewhat Meets | <ul><li>Teachers and students track progress weekly during advisory by checking grades to identify students who are at risk for probation; students name that they can then seek out support from their teachers to raise their grades, but feel mostly on their own to do so.</li><li>The Problem Solving Team (made up of an administrator, social worker, counselor and teachers) takes referrals from teachers and counselors to provide added support to students.</li><li>School staff note that there are not yet systems in place to provide Tier 2 support or hold teachers accountable for providing differentiated support for students in classrooms.</li><li>There is not yet evidence that data inquiry cycles consistently inform decisions around differentiation of instruction, interventions, and enrichment.</li></ul> |

| Focus on Instruction, continued. | | | <ul><li>Data is disaggregated to identify trends by class and student.</li><li>50% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "My school's systems, structures, and processes support me and my team to frequently and routinely use student academic data to pinpoint class and student needs."</li></ul> |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Rigorous Classroom Practice**<br>All students describe, and are observed, learning high-level and grade-level appropriate knowledge and skills in classrooms where each student is challenged; teachers are observed bringing the school's instructional vision to life in their classrooms. All students demonstrate progress toward stated learning objectives through their work or responses. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>Grade-level appropriate instruction and high levels of student engagement were observed in 100% of classrooms visited.</li><li>Students report feeling challenged and reminded by teachers often of the college prep trajectory.</li><li>There is an opportunity for all staff to align on what rigor looks like at Lincoln; in most classrooms visited, teachers were doing a lot of the heavy lifting and there was a lack of time for students to engage in productive struggle.</li></ul> |
| | **Supports for Special Populations**<br>There is a strategy in action for ensuring that special populations of students—including students with disabilities and ELLs— are accurately identified, and receive integrated, inclusive, and high-quality instructional support. Students' progress is monitored to ensure that they are moving expediently towards success in an inclusion environment. A variety of models and supports, including interventions, ensure students are adequately challenged and ultimately successful. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>Due to the school's selective enrollment process, there are few special education and ELL students enrolled at Lincoln MS.</li><li>Students with IEPs are included in all LCPA MS classes.</li><li>Teachers report support from counselors to make accommodations for students, but note a lack of professional development around supporting students with special needs.</li></ul> |

| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Collective Responsibility**: *The school faculty and staff ensure there is collective responsibility for both the quality of instruction and student learning and success.* | ***Systems and Structures for School-wide Continuous Improvement*** <br> Leadership effectively implements systems and structures to cultivate shared ownership for school-wide continuous improvement for both the quality of instruction and each students' learning. A representative group of building leaders, teachers, and staff (e.g., ILT) takes ownership for implementation and progress monitoring of school improvement. | 2: Mostly Meets | • The administrative team (Principal, instructional coach and two APs) are leading the school's vision toward quality instruction; they meet weekly to develop professional development opportunities for teachers, oversee discipline and complete classroom walkthroughs to monitor teacher practice. <br> • Leadership has mapped out a plan of implementation of specific structures and systems to cultivate shared ownership for school-wide continuous improvement (e.g., PLCs are currently run by leadership team members and are moving toward teacher leadership). <br> • Systems and structures for school-wide continuous improvement are currently being built out and implemented (e.g., RtI systems for monitoring interventions and students' progress). <br> • 71% of staff survey respondents indicate they are not sure that "A representative group (e.g. ILT) takes ownership for implementation and progress monitoring of school improvement." |
| | ***School-wide Beliefs and Trust*** <br> Staff have, and inculcate in students, the belief that all students can and will learn. This motivates all to continuously improve teaching and learning. Staff demonstrate individual and collective responsibility for student learning and behavior that extends beyond individual classrooms or departments and permeates the school. Staff intentionally promote the success for all students, which results in all students feeling valued, supported, and challenged to learn in and out of school. <br><br> Interactions between adults in the building are positive and supportive, resulting in a sense of | 1:Somewhat Meets | • Students report feeling that the majority of teachers believe they can succeed and that they want them to be successful. <br> • There is a feeling amongst staff that not all staff believe that every student can succeed. <br> • Staff report generally collegial interactions and name a desire to get to know each other better across grade levels and content areas. <br> • 71% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "I feel empowered and responsible for the success of students in our school." <br> • 64% agree or strongly agree that "All staff at my school demonstrate a responsibility for all students' learning and behaviors, beyond just the students in their classroom or grade level." |

| Collective Responsibility, Continued. | trust and partnership among staff. Staff own the success of all students. And there is a shared culture of continuous improvement for all students, staff, and schoolwide success. | | • 50% of staff survey respondents disagree, and another 21% strongly disagree that "There is trust amongst all staff at my school." Some staff express a feeling that "everyone is on the same page" and others express feeling discontented with the direction of the school. |
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| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
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| **Planning:** *Evidence-based, actionable improvement plans that address the root causes of low performance, informed by a review of existing conditions with input from school, district, and community stakeholders.* | **Planning Processes** School stakeholders are actively engaged in evidence-based processes to identify and analyze root causes of low performance. These processes include honest conversations about how the school works and an examination of data, including disaggregated data. The processes produce no more than four major improvement strategies that planning participants believe can be implemented and will lead to substantial improvement. | 0: Not Meeting | • The school is not identified for improvement by the state, therefore it does not require a state mandated plan. However, there is no evidence of an internally developed plan that describes the focus and direction for the school. |
| | **The School Improvement Plan** The school has one evidence-based, equity-focused actionable school improvement plan that addresses the root causes of low performance. The school plan focuses the school's energy and resources on no more than four strategies that will impact the instructional core and increase student learning. The plan identifies a set of action steps for each strategy, and, for each action step, assigns responsibility, provides a timeline, and identifies critical milestones. Teachers in the school can describe the school improvement strategies and explain how they expect the strategies to lead to improvement. | 0: Not Meeting | • The school is not identified for improvement by the state, therefore it does not require a state mandated plan. However, there is no evidence of an internally developed plan that describes the focus and direction for the school. |

| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
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| *Performance Management: Consistent processes for using data to measure both implementation and outcomes to determine what's working and inform efforts to improve.* | **Plan Implementation & Management**<br>A team of school leaders meets frequently and regularly to manage plan implementation and impact with a focus on the following questions:<br>● *Have we done what we said we would do in the plan? If not, why not?*<br>● *Is it making a difference? What's the evidence?*<br>● *What do we have to do differently?* | 0: Not Meeting | ● The school is not identified for improvement by the state, therefore it does not require a state mandated plan. However, there is no evidence of an internally developed plan that describes the focus and direction for the school. |
| | **Monitors Key Indicators to Inform Decisions and Actions**<br>The school identifies and monitors a limited number of leading and lagging indicators to measure schoolwide progress, early warning signs, and/or plan next steps. Data is relevant, timely, accessible, accurate, and disaggregated by subgroup. There are clear roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting. Teams regularly analyze data to identify disproportionality, identify root causes, establish key actions, and track progress of action items for continuous improvement. | 2: Mostly Meets | ● 71% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "Teams routinely monitor key data points to measure school-wide progress and at-risk student indicators."<br>● Staff report monitoring students' grades, attendance, behavior and assessment data to track students at risk of probation.<br>● Data (attendance, grades, discipline) is pulled once per quarter by leadership to identify and monitor students who are at risk of academic probation; this is in addition to the weekly grade checks conducted by teachers in classrooms with students.<br>● Staff report that there is a problem of having to demit students who are unable to come off of probation; there is a need for interventions for these students.<br>● Data is not consistently disaggregated by student groups, making it unclear if there is disproportionality. |

| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
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| *Partnering: Partnerships that help the school meet the multiple needs of teachers and students.* | **Family and Community Engagement** The school operates with the understanding that students' most important influencer and advocate are their families. The school intentionally builds community and family partnerships that honor and recognize families' existing knowledge and skills. The school connects with and engages families through intentional programming (e.g series of family nights), regular two-way dialogue in family accessible languages, and capacity building (e.g. Parent Liaisons and Parents-as-Teachers program) designed to strengthen family-school partnership and further student learning including in the creation of student academic, college, and career plans. Staff have respect and knowledge of cultural norms and act in ways that are welcoming and responsive to students and their families. | 2: Mostly Meets | • Staff report an expectation that all teachers keep in regular contact with families.<br>• Additionally, Google Classroom is utilized for communication of grades and assignments, although families report a lack of consistency of use across teachers.<br>• The School Advisory Committee (SAC) holds monthly meetings for families and is run by an executive board that is voted in.<br>• Families report the SAC "feels more like a PTA", rather than a SAC, because there is a lack of opportunity to make school level changes or make their voice heard in school decisions.<br>• SAC initiatives are supportive of teachers (e.g., fundraising).<br>• Families report feeling supported and welcomed at the school by staff, leadership and office staff in particular.<br>• Families also named a Lincoln Ambassador Program they were trained on that is focused mainly on recruitment.<br>• 64% of staff survey respondents agree, and another 14% strongly agree, that "Families are intentionally engaged as partners in student learning."<br>• 57% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "The school communicates with families about student academic data." |
| | **Strategic Partnerships** The school has a limited number of community and business partnerships that support specific school and student needs, such as providing students with real-world application opportunities, college and career exploration, and rewards for positive student behavior. Students have equitable access to resources and partnerships. The school regularly reviews the effectiveness of partnership programs and makes changes as needed to meet student needs. Partnerships are actively managed to streamline efforts and impact. | 1: Somewhat Meets | • The school is in the process of identifying and formalizing additional partnerships now that the middle school is functioning as its own school. As a result, it is not yet clear how partnerships are/will be strategically reviewed and managed.<br>• There are some partnerships in place to meet student non-academic needs such as VSP, which provides students with eye glasses.<br>• The school had planned to adopt International Baccalaureate to align with the high school, however the partnership and adoption of the program is paused. Not all staff are clear about the status of the partnership and program. |

| Partnering, continued. | | | ● 43% of staff survey respondents disagree or strongly disagree that "I am aware of the partnerships my school has and the resources I can access through them to support students," and another 29% are unsure. |

| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
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| *Conditions: Sufficient school-level control over people, time, money and program to address the root causes of low performance to ensure all students can succeed.* | **Larger systems, structures, and practices (e.g. district, union, state, etc.) enable school-level control of conditions necessary to implement the plan and address the root causes of low performance**<br>● People<br>● Time<br>● Money<br>● Program<br><br>The district recognizes that the school is the unit of improvement and allows for flexibility in the use of people, time, funding, and program so that the school can meet the needs of all students. Systems and structures are clear and aligned so that principals can focus on the success of all students. The district provides school leaders with the necessary support and ongoing capacity-building to achieve school priorities. | 2: Mostly Meets | ● As a signature school with higher performance than other district schools, Lincoln MS stakeholders describe feeling " left alone"  by the district and able to  opt out of requirements or pursue opportunities that may not be available to other schools.<br>● There are some collective bargaining agreement policies that can provide barriers at the school. For example, the requirement to have an administrator present at all PLCs is a barrier in scheduling and holding meetings.<br>● There are limited opportunities for the development of school leadership within the district.<br>● The school is under an Assistant Superintendent who supervises the principal. While the Assistant Superintendent is present at the school with some regularity, stakeholders note that his time and capacity is absorbed by lower performing schools. |

| Conditions, continued. | Sufficient school leader authority over conditions to implement the plan and address the root causes of low performance<br>● People<br>● Time<br>● Money<br>● Program<br><br>The principal has the authority to create staff configurations and work assignments in alignment with the school's instructional model, design the right positions, and fill positions with the right people to do their most effective work. The principal has the authority to make changes to the school schedule such as PLCs, interventions, and/or other school-based professional development activities so that the school can meet the needs of all students. The principal has the authority to align the school's financial resources with school plan priorities. The principal has sufficient authority to shape teaching approaches and related services around the school's mission and the needs of all students. | 2: Mostly Meets | People:<br>● The school is able to select staff for open positions. Due to district restrictions the school leader has not always been allowed to hire early (e.g., in March.)<br>● The school has limited authority to terminate ineffective staff due to collective bargaining agreement and district processes for tenured staff. The process for teacher termination is complex and long, often requiring 6+ months of documents.<br>● Staff describes incidences of following the process only to run into district HR errors, which resulted in having to restart the process.<br><br>Time:<br>● Lincoln MS leadership describes having authority to design the master schedule.<br>● There are some limitations to offer an 8th hour- primarily due to bussing schedules. They have the earliest dismissal time (2:20pm) and a late bus would not be able to pick students up until 5:30pm.<br><br>Money:<br>● Lincoln MS receives additional funding (approximately $100,000) as a signature school.<br>● The school does not receive additional title funding.<br>● Lincoln MS also received a grant from SmartSchools KC that runs through November 2020.<br><br>Program:<br>● Lincoln MS staff utilize the district curriculum and have some flexibility to design programming and course offerings to meet student needs. As student enrollment increases leadership believes they will be able to offer increased electives. |

| Conditions, continued. | **Enrollment and Configuration**<br>School configuration and/or application and student enrollment processes enable equitable access to a complete feeder. Families have data and access to make informed choices regarding the school/program that best meets their students' needs and interests. Principals have the ability to recruit students to their school and recruitment processes are equitable. The district and school principal cultivate a distinct, consistent brand presence for the school, resulting in positive stakeholder perceptions. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>As a higher performing signature middle school, Lincoln MS is a popular and sought after option for KCPS students and families.</li><li>Since it is a signature school, students must apply for admission. To be eligible, applicants must score at or above the 60th percentile on a national standardized reading and math test. Students must also have a record of good citizenship and a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher. A limited number of middle school students may enter on a probationary basis if applicants score at or above a cumulative percentile of 130 on a national standardized assessment in math and reading, with neither score below the 55th percentile.</li><li>Originally housed in the Lincoln College Preparatory School (LCPS), students applied for enrollment with the understanding they would be admitted to the full 8-12 feeder; however, with the move of middle school to its own building there is uncertainty and concern regarding middle school students' entrance to the high school. Some stakeholders express concern regarding a scenario in which students would need to reapply to the high school.</li><li>Additionally, the high school offers the IB diploma, and while the middle school has considered becoming an IB middle school, plans for IB adoption are on hold. While the school may opt to not pursue official IB status, there is an opportunity for the school to continue to think about and collaborate with the high school to ensure alignment across middle and high school grades and programming so that all students experience a seamless and successful transition from middle to high school.</li><li>86% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree "My school is an attractive/desirable option for students and families."</li></ul> |
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| Element | At Highest Performing Schools | Rating | Discussion of Evidence |
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| **Leadership:** *Principal who can manage and communicate complexity while maintaining focus on the school's vision and key priorities.* | **Stakeholder Investment and Mobilization**<br>Principal effectively constructs and adapts communication and actions to inspire and invest diverse stakeholders in a clear, compelling, and inclusive vision for change. Staff receive timely and transparent updates on progress toward the vision. Staff understand the vision, their role in the vision, and rationale for changes. Principal builds a culture of collective responsibility for the success of every student by mobilizing and empowering teams that support and sustain the vision over time. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>The 2019-2020 school year is the first year of operation for Lincoln MS as a stand-alone school. Middle grades were originally part of Lincoln College Preparatory Academy (LCPA).</li><li>The school leader was recruited by the Superintendent and brought on to oversee the transition.</li><li>School staff who were a part of LCPA describe feeling as the forgotten stepchild in the building -- a feeling that they share is no longer true at the Lincoln MS.</li><li>Staff note that school leadership has been successful at building one team.</li><li>School staff also describe how this year is focused on establishing systems and structures.</li><li>Staff describe a desire for greater communication regarding the overall direction of the school, including why initiatives are prioritized or deprioritized, which will contribute to increased buy-in with key efforts.</li><li>57% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "I understand and am invested in our school leader's vision for change/improvement."</li><li>50% of staff survey respondents disagree, and another 14% strongly disagree, that "School communication is clear, consistent, and includes the why/what/how of changes."</li></ul> |
| | **Sustained Focus on Results**<br>Principal models and sets clear expectations for all staff, creating a culture of accountability for the learning of all students. Principal prioritizes efforts that advance progress of all students and school goals. Principal effectively advocates for the school needs with the district and reaches beyond the building to pursue needed resources and bring in best practices in order to meet the needs of all students. | 3: Meets | <ul><li>School leadership prioritized the development and implementation of key systems and structures in their first year including: PLCs, ILT, observation and feedback and more.</li><li>The administrative team (principal and assistant principals) each own key initiatives and grade level supervision. They are responsible for setting expectations and accountability within each system.</li><li>The team collects and examines data regularly to inform changes such as revisions to PD, observation and feedback and more.</li></ul> |

| Leadership, continued. | | | <ul><li>71% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "The school maintains a focus on our goals and improvement efforts."</li><li>93% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree that "Staff is held accountable for the success of all students."</li></ul> |
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| | **Talent Management**<br>Principal works with the district to forecast staffing needs and recruit quality, diverse candidates. Principal implements formal and rigorous staff selection, hiring, and induction processes. Hiring and assignment processes match staff to specific positions based on skill. Positions have clear roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations that align with the school's mission and plan, and hold staff to the success of all students . All teachers receive accurate and specific feedback through the evaluation process. Principal is intentional about retaining high-performing staff and designing and implementing staff succession plans. | 2: Mostly Meets | <ul><li>As part of starting the new middle school, school leadership was responsible for hiring staff including bringing 7 of the 23 teachers from LCPS.</li><li>Leadership actively recruits staff on an ongoing basis and leverages HR support to recruit and cultivate candidates including establishing partners with universities and attending job fairs.</li><li>The school organizes its own hiring process utilizing Haberman protocols for selecting "Star" teachers and requiring demonstration lessons of all teacher candidates.</li><li>The administrative team divides grade levels and content areas for evaluation purposes. Stakeholders indicate that the platform to record evaluation data is cumbersome as a result teachers opt to not review feedback. Staff describes that it is a challenge and multi-step process to gather school-wide evaluation data for continuous improvement processes.</li><li>The school focuses on the top 20% of teachers to ensure retention, making sure they feel valued and supported; it's named that it is difficult to exit teachers who are at the bottom 20%.</li></ul> |
| | **Resource Maximization**<br>Principal is adept at maximizing resources to meet the needs of all students and accomplish school goals. Principal demonstrates persistence, ingenuity, and resourcefulness in identifying untapped resources in the areas of time, money, programs, and partnerships. Those resources advance outcomes for every student. | 3: Meets | <ul><li>Given the school's increased autonomy resulting from its high performance, the school leader is able to more flexibly utilize time, money, and programming (e.g., determining the school's master schedule based on minutes required for content classes, adding electives courses).</li><li>Due to staffing constraints, it is reported that a majority of Signature Funds are spent on teacher salaries.</li><li>The school has grants from School Smart KC and a STEM grant for Project Lead the Way.</li></ul> |

| Leadership, continued. | | | <ul><li>The school is considering and planning for an 8th hour to take advantage of additional time outside of traditional school hours.</li><li>36% of staff survey respondents agree or strongly agree, 28% are not sure, and 36% disagree or strongly disagree that "Leadership is adept and creative at maximizing resources to meet the needs of all students and accomplish school goals."</li></ul> |
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