

Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association



Application Part 2:

Building on Strengths and Planning for Improvement

The Minnesota School of Excellence Program promotes excellence through a rigorous evaluation process that showcases dynamic schools of the 21st century.

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Revised October 2012

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



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After completing the Self-Study (application Part 1), use the Minnesota School of Excellence Application Part 2 to build on strengths and plan for improvement in your school community.

Excellence is a process. Let the self-study guide your growth. In Part 2 of the application, **show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:**

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

Note for Standard 5: The Knowledge and Data standard is based on student and staff performance with data from your MCA scores and other applicable sources. In the application, attach documentation that supports your objectives in responding to areas from the self-study. Using multiple sources of data, including the Minnesota Department of Education Web site, illustrate your plans with concise, specific data examples.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Signatures Verifying Application

Name of School: Lyndale Community School

Name of School Principal: Mark Stauduhar

School District: Minneapolis Public Schools

Date of Application: June 2017

Chair, Board of Education Jenny Arneson

_____ signature

Superintendent, School District Ed Graff

_____ signature

Principal Mark Stauduhar

_____ signature

Chair, Faculty Advisory Council (type name)

_____ signature

Chair, Parent Group Bridget Gernander

_____ signature

For MESPA office use: validation signatures

Date of MN School of Excellence validation _____

Chair, _____
Minnesota School of Excellence Program Committee

President, _____
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

Executive Director, _____
Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



General Information about the School Community

Describe the school setting.

Provide a brief narrative snapshot of the school in one page. Include a summary of the school's mission or vision in the statement.

Lyndale Community School is a Pre-K through 5th grade public school that exists to create success for all learners by helping each child achieve measurable growth each academic year.

In our learning community, we meet every child where they are and work for their continuous improvement in a warm, nurturing environment. We guide our students to achieve excellence, and help them become responsible members of our community.

Lyndale Community School provides a positive learning environment that fosters:

- 1. Academic excellence and responsibility**
- 2. Collaboration with and connection to community**
- 3. Integration of the arts into daily life**
- 4. Community of engagement and diversity**

Lyndale Community School is located at the intersection of 34th Street and Grand Ave in South Minneapolis. The current location was established in 1968, with a previous building located 2 blocks to the East, on the property that is currently known as Painter Park. Lyndale Community School works hard to collaborate and connect with our greater community. In 2015, Lyndale Community School teamed up with the Lyndale Neighborhood Association and muralist Greta McLain to create a mural for the school's exterior walls. The project, funded by a Minnesota State Arts board grant, brought together Lyndale students, parents and staff, along with community members, to envision, design and create the mural together. The final mural covers the large wall facing the playground, close to the main entrance on 34th and Pleasant.

The staff at Lyndale Community School believes it our responsibility to hold all students to high expectations for behavior and academics. Furthermore, it is imperative that we monitor student progress towards these expectations in an effort to modify and enhance our approaches, thus leading to stronger student outcomes. Through reflective practices, adaptive approaches, and ongoing communication with stakeholders, we work hard daily to provide our students with the word class education and experience they deserve.

Lyndale Community School is made up of a diverse student body; Our student body is comprised of 1% Native American, 2% Asian American, 15% Hispanic American, 31% White American, and 51% African American. Within that group of students we have 39% receiving ELL services and 14% receiving Special Education services. We have 66% of our students who qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.

Lyndale Community School offers extended day opportunities through the ALC after school tutoring program. We also offer GEMS/GISE for K-5th grade students. We use the Second Step Curriculum to support the development of our student's social and emotional skills. This in turn helps promote a positive school climate. We recognize students exhibiting our building expectations through the Lyndale Eagle of the Month program, encourage student attendance through the Perfect Attendance program, and emphasize independent reading at home through the Lyndale Reader's Club.

Lyndale Community School is privileged to have highly involved parents and families who provide ongoing support and feedback to help us improve our practice. Our PTO supports our school community through the allocation of funds raised at events and various teacher appreciation opportunities. Our school calendar is full of family events and opportunities for families to hear about their child's growth in school, connect with our staff, and get to know one another. At Lyndale, we believe that these partnerships contribute to the positive relationships that exist between our stakeholders.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in
Ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 1 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (Indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (Indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

1A. Stay informed of the continually changing context for teaching and learning.

1B. Embody learner-centered leadership.

1C. Capitalize on the leadership skills of others.

1D. Align operations to support student, adult, and school learning needs.

1E. Advocate for efforts to ensure that policies are aligned to effective teaching and learning.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in
Ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

1A. Stay informed of the continually changing context for teaching and learning.

Our school engaged in self-study through implementation of a survey to school stakeholders. Of our stakeholder respondents, 91% indicated a score of 4 or 5 on the three scorable indicators.

Lyndale Community School strives to stay informed of the continually changing context for teaching and learning through strategic professional development aimed at addressing the needs of our school, and creating systems to monitor and adjust the implementation of research-based strategies outlined in our School Improvement Plan. In addition, teachers at Lyndale are provided the opportunity to collaboratively design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of standards-based instruction by participating in data teams.

Data teams meet bi-weekly and are comprised of teachers who have voluntarily agreed to work with one another. Some teachers have chosen to work with their grade level counterparts, while others have organized themselves by content (i.e. mathematics). Data teams have the autonomy to select their own goals. However, their goals must connect to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the Strategic Plan of the Minneapolis Public Schools. Teams select a Minnesota state standard that they will address in their classrooms, administer a pre-assessment, analyze the data, set S.M.A.R.T. goals, and monitor student learning throughout the cycle.

Data teams help teachers at Lyndale work towards achievement of short-term and long-term goals. During each data cycle, data teams intentionally focus on current levels of student performance in relation to a state standard and reflect upon their actions, with the goal of growth in proficiency of that particular skill and standard. Furthermore, it is our belief that instruction and continuous student improvement based upon mastery of standards will translate to student success on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Finally, data teams foster a community of learners who reflect upon their practice, and support one another in the adoption of best practices inside their classroom(s).

Administrators at Lyndale encourage and support data teams by dedicating specific times for groups to meet and providing them with guidance and resources related to the process. Every six weeks, staff participate in data team “share-outs” to celebrate and share data team work with colleagues. Share-outs are learning opportunities that provide participants with a chance to interact with colleagues, identify effective instructional strategies, and better understand the continually changing context for teaching and learning.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in
Ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

1B. Embody learner-centered leadership.

As our self-study indicates, we scored very strong in learner-centered leadership. Of the stakeholders responding, 95% indicated a score of 4 or 5 on the four scorable indicators.

Lyndale staff has moved from the traditional large group professional development to differentiated learning throughout the year, as we meet bi-monthly for professional development (PD). Our Lyndale staff meets with teams that we have chosen on the opposite weeks of PD. We are able to form our own “Professional Learning Communities” (PLC) based on the needs of our students. We focus on goals that align with our SIP and focus on improving the academic outcomes for all learners. We come together as a large group three times during the year to participate data share-out as a whole group. As the year progresses, and student needs change, we are able to move to different teams and focus on new goals. This process has enabled the educators at Lyndale to focus on student-centered goals and the practical application of new strategies and interventions. We have made much more deliberate and thoughtful student goals by building time into our work week to meet as a team and setting parameters for implementation of our data team process and PLCs.

Through the work in our School Improvement Plan (SIP), we have identified areas of improvement within our school community and have dedicated our meeting time as a large group to further our learning. Additionally, we have staff-lead PD sessions, which provide highly relevant and meaningful learning together. We focus on grade-level standards when it comes to math and literacy, and effective research-based practices for vocabulary acquisition across all content areas. This learning has directly impacted our work with our SIP at Lyndale.

Our school engages in learner-centered leadership because our staff members make decisions and involve themselves in all parts of the learning and professional development process, specifically by focusing on student needs in data analysis and engaging in and creating relevant professional development. Aligning our learning and reflection to the school improvement goals and the mission and vision for our school has allowed us to restructure our learning culture and acknowledge that every staff member at Lyndale has an important role in student learning. Our educational support professionals have been given the opportunity this year to participate in after school PD by using collaboration funds (Q-Comp). This has broadened the scope of learning to not only include licensed staff, but also the non-licensed staff in our building. By the inclusion of our educational support professionals, we have enhanced the collaboration of all educators at Lyndale.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

1C. Capitalize on the leadership skills of others.

As the Lyndale staff demonstrated in our staff survey, about 84% indicated a score of 4 or 5 on the two scorable indicators.

The Lyndale Community School Leadership Team (Site Council) is made up of parents, staff, and community members who meet monthly to discuss work toward our School Improvement Plan (SIP). At these meetings we provide updates, implement and maintain site-based bylaws. We share the work of Site Council with our building instructional leadership (ILT) team as well. When making building decisions, multiple sources are sought out to be part of the decision-making process. Administrators, teachers, support staff and parents are involved in the decision-making.

At Lyndale Community School we feel that we are all held accountable for the learning of our students. As the survey indicated, there is a shared leadership with this work. An area for growth is to look at the skills and experience that other community members bring to our leadership tasks. We are doing this by meeting with the president of our Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) group regularly prior to the PTO meetings, that all families are invited to attend.

Our educators feel that shared leadership creates shared responsibility for implementation and accountability for learning results. We show this as a strength of community, and we will continue to utilize our entire staff, both licensed and non-licensed, to implement student-centered learning.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

1D. Align operations to support student, adult, and school learning needs.

Of the stakeholders who responded, about 86% indicated a score of 4 or 5 on the three scorable indicators.

Lyndale community school works hard with its stakeholders to ensure that the allocation of resources is equitable, determined by the needs of our students, and responsive to the changing needs of students, adults, and the school community.

Building administration actively seeks input from families and staff with regard to the allocation of funds, provided to us by the Minneapolis Public Schools. Families are afforded multiple opportunities to provide input as to how funds should be spent. Additionally, during the 2016-2017 school year, teachers at Lyndale were instrumental in creating a budget proposal that maintained current core programming despite significant funding cuts.

We, as a building, seek to allocate human resources equitably based upon the social and academic needs of our students. Traditionally, in the third grade, we have used building funds to ensure that an associate educator is dedicated to each classroom in an effort to support student learning. In doing so, Lyndale has increased the student to teacher/adult ratio at a crucial time in a student's academic career. Furthermore, Lyndale has supported students who are learning English as a second language by funding an ESL teacher at each grade level, in addition to funding a newcomer program. Our special education assistants help support our students in all areas of the school and work very closely with the licensed staff to provide modifications and accommodations for all learners. Our bilingual associate educators work very closely with our students and families, both facilitating parental support and helping support our EL students in the classroom. With our services and staff allocations, Lyndale has, and continues to, support the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students we serve.

In an effort to respond to the changing needs of students, Lyndale teachers have a common prep period so that they are able to confer with each other about student achievement, the implementation of research based strategies, and the effectiveness of said strategies. Over time, Lyndale has utilized Q-Comp funds to enhance collaboration between classroom teachers and support staff and ensure that the learning needs of both students and adults are being met.

We have identified an area of growth, which involved increasing opportunities to include support staff and non-licensed educators in more school-wide PD opportunities. We would like to offer trainings to staff-specific to student needs, and further focus on diverse learners and students needing special education support.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 1 – Learning Centered

Balance management and leadership roles to lead schools in ways that place student and adult learning at the center.

1E. Advocate for efforts to ensure that policies are aligned to effective teaching and learning.

Of the stakeholders responding, about 75% indicated a score of 4 or 5 on the only scorable indicators.

Lyndale Community School works hard to engage stakeholders in dialogue regarding advocacy and action(s) that impact the performance of both students and adults.

Lyndale Community School designs and communicates policies aimed at effective teaching policies and best practices. To establish these policies, we collaborate with staff, students, families, and district departments through Site Council Meetings, PTO Meetings, student surveys and district-led professional development sessions.

The administration at Lyndale frequently communicates building and district policies to building staff in an effort to ensure that practices support the high-performance of Lyndale students. Building staff proactively communicate building expectations to both students and families to foster positive relationships and productive classrooms.

Lyndale Community School uses multiple vehicles to recognize stakeholder effort and achievement. The Instructional Leadership Team examines student achievement across grade levels to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional approaches. Students in our 5th grade class have the opportunity to be nominated by their classmates to the Eagle of the Month Club, in which students are recognized for demonstrating the characteristics we wish to see in our students.

Finally, parents and community members can choose to become involved in decision-making through Site Council, PTO, and School Board Meetings. All are open to the public and offer the opportunity to provide feedback to the school about specific policies and curriculum. Additionally, Lyndale seeks to support members of our school community who do not speak English through the utilization of culturally responsive communication techniques and bilingual program aides.

Lyndale can address the need to ensure that building policies are aligned to effective teaching and learning through a thorough examination of our policies, practices, and procedures in relation to student achievement and engagement data. Through continued dialogue with our staff, with particular attention paid to the achievement of our students of color, the Instructional Leadership Team can begin to formulate a strategic plan that will be embedded in our School Improvement Plan.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 2 – Diverse Communities

Set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, Emotional and physical development of all students in an Environment that acknowledges fosters and celebrates diversity.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 2 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (Indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (Indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

2A. Build consensus on a vision that reflects the core values of the school community.

2B. Value and use diversity to enhance the learning of the entire school community.

2C. Broaden the framework for child development beyond academics.

2D. Develop a learning culture that is adaptive, collaborative, innovative and supportive.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 2 – Diverse Communities

Set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of all students in an environment that acknowledges fosters and celebrates diversity.

2A. Build consensus on a vision that reflects the core values of the school community.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, over 91% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to the school's effectiveness in building consensus on a vision that reflects the values of the school community. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that the vision is evident in daily language, decisions and ethical actions of stakeholders, and those stakeholders describe the school as a learning community that examines the alignment of teaching and administrative practices with the school's mission, vision and core beliefs.

Specifically, evidence of this area includes reading Lyndale's mission and vision at all staff, leadership and site council meetings, ensuring that staff and communities know our mission and vision. Staff communicate and discuss our mission and vision at school events such as curriculum nights and Spanish and Somali parent meetings. At other various school events, such as morning welcomes, stay and chat morning coffee for parents, Donuts for Dads, Muffins for Moms, and International Night, Lyndale's mission and vision is communicated through involvement, welcoming and conversation. Lyndale community school staff, families and community members also created a mural for our school. The mural process involved reflection by all members in order showcase our school's mission, vision and diversity.

While no respondents gave a ranking of 1 or 2 on these indicators, we identified ongoing opportunities to strengthen this area. Specifically, while the school's mission is evident on key documents including meeting agendas, the mission, vision and core values could also be more visibly posted including through posting the school building to further reinforce shared understanding for all stakeholders. We also believe we could work to include more diversity on our leadership, PTO and site council meetings. Additionally, we could focus on the recruitment and welcoming of neighborhood families, most specifically Latino neighborhood families who choose to attend other schools in the area.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 2 – Diverse Communities

Set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, emotional and physical development of all students in an environment that acknowledges, fosters and celebrates diversity.

2B. Value and use diversity to enhance the learning of the entire school community.

Many of our stakeholders value and use diversity to enhance the learning of the entire school community. Of the stakeholders who responded, 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on four indicators related to how the school values and uses diversity to enhance learning of the entire school community.

Evidence of this school culture can be seen in activities and events such as International Night, cultural events such as dance groups from Patrick Henry High School, Native American Drumming Groups, and National African American Parent Involvement Day, at which we hold events for families and invited former students to participate this year. Additionally, we include and support our multilingual families with bilingual classroom support, family liaisons, after-school bilingual homework help and bilingual lunch staff. We also provide bilingual support on our annual COGAT (gifted and talented assessment), and work to recruit diverse populations for our advanced differentiation program. Staff also work to include all students in extracurricular activities, specifically with recruitment of diverse populations for afterschool STEM programming, and the program “Girls on the Run.” Students in grades four and five also have the opportunity to take Arabic, which supports expanding their cultural and linguistic knowledge. Our school also holds a unique event every year, Arts Extravaganza, which showcases the many artistic talents of our students. Our students needing special education support and students part of our Autism program are also included in classrooms and valued members of our community.

Opportunities for improvement this area include the recruitment and involvement of more diverse populations on our leadership teams, PTO and Site Council. Additionally, all school staff could benefit from more cultural competence training to increase their understanding of the experiences of the school’s Somali, Native American, African American, and Latino and Muslim students. Finally, staff would also benefit from additional training in supporting students with disabilities.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 2 – Diverse Communities

Set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, Emotional and physical development of all students in an environment that acknowledges, fosters and celebrates diversity.

2C. Broaden the framework for child development beyond academics.

Of the stakeholders who responded to this survey, 89% gave a ranking of high-average to outstanding on the indicators related to the school’s approach to broadening the framework for child development beyond academics.

Respondents overwhelmingly indicate that the principals, teachers, and stakeholders consistently implement a balanced, whole-child learning culture for all students with in- and out-of-school learning experiences provided by the school and community. School practices that support this framework include the school-wide behavior support plan for students as well as school projects, activities and events such as International Night, Arts Extravaganza, Grade-Level Showcases, Bridges Children’s Theatre partnership, Girls on the Run, STEM night, GEMS & GISE Science and Engineering.

Our after-school programming provides a wide array of activities for students. Some examples of after-school activities include Sports and More, Kids in the Kitchen, Ukulele, and Arts & Crafts. Youth Farm has partnered with Lyndale to provide agriculture and health awareness programming for our students.

Field trips support development of the whole child, including but not limited to trips to museums such as the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Children’s Museum, Science Museum of Minnesota, Bakken Museum, Minnesota History Museum and the Mill City Museum. Field trips beyond museums include the Children’s Theatre, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, Fort Snelling, Minnesota Zoo, Historic Kelley Farm, Minnesota Agriculture day and Sea Life Aquarium.

No respondents gave a ranking of below average on these indicators, child development beyond academics is an area of great strength for the school.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 2 – Diverse Communities

Set high expectations and standards for the academic, social, Emotional and physical development of all students in an Environment that acknowledges, fosters and celebrates diversity.

2D. Develop a learning culture that is adaptive, collaborative, innovative and supportive.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on four indicators related to how the school develops a learning culture that is adaptive, collaborative, innovative and supportive.

Many of the routine practices that have been established at Lyndale Elementary require a culture of adaptation, collaboration, innovation and support. Our bi-weekly data team meetings allow staff to join data teams vertically (across grade levels). Teachers work together to identify similar standards from grade to grade and identify strategies to best teach those standards. They collect data after teaching the standards and share results. In addition, the ESL teaching framework in our building requires a high level of collaboration and support. One full-time ESL teacher is assigned to each grade-level. The ESL teachers co-teach at the grade level with the classroom teachers, delivering innovative, collaborative and differentiated lessons for all levels of learners within the class. This framework requires daily communication about lessons and students and results in a culture of collaboration and support. Similarly, many ASD students (students who are on the Autism spectrum) are mainstreamed at their grade level. Autism teachers and support staff regularly check-in and provide support and collaboration to both the students and classroom teachers in those classrooms. Two math coaches also co-teach and work collaboratively across grade levels to provide support for all students in math class. Regularly scheduled weekly team meetings with a common prep time at each grade level provide more opportunities for collaboration among teachers and staff that serve the particular grade level. Our bi-monthly professional development meetings are often teacher-led and focused on the goals in our district school improvement plan. These meetings are another venue for communication and collaboration among the staff.

Student council and the “Green Team” organics recycling team are two ways students learn in a collaborative and supportive way at Lyndale. The student council is made up of representatives from each grade level. The students work together to create service projects and school spirit days. Council members learn leadership skills and ways to collaborate and support one another. The Green Team includes 4th and 5th grade students who work together daily to collect the organics waste from each classroom. This innovative program is unique to Lyndale and beyond and teaches students how to be environmental stewards, as well as to communicate and collaborate to coordinate the daily collection of organics.

One opportunity for improvement in this area would be our Collaborative Team Planning (CTP) process to identify and support struggling learners. While the CTP framework is meant to create innovation and collaboration, the teachers need further training so that the process is clear and consistent for all grade levels. The protocols for entering data and following up from year-to-year need to be reviewed. A common understanding of the process would improve our ability to identify and track struggling learners.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____

Another area of improvement identified from our self-study was reviewing instructional practices and adjusting based on performance. Our instructional leadership team began work to address this issue just prior to this SOE self-study. Teachers met to identify their personal strengths and areas for growth as a teacher. The ILT have gathered those responses and will begin to create peer learning groups where teachers with specific strengths will be matched with teachers who self-identified that strength as an area of growth. Our plan is for those teachers to meet, discuss and do peer observations. This process will begin in the spring of this year and continue into the next academic year.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 3 – 21st Century Learners

Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 3 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (Indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (Indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

3A. Ensure alignment of curriculum with district and school goals, standards, assessments and resources.

3B. Invest in a technology-rich culture that connects learning to the global society.

3C. Hire, retain and support high quality teachers.

3D. Ensure rigorous, appropriate and relevant instruction for all students.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 3 – 21st Century Learners

Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement.

3A. Ensure alignment of curriculum with district and school goals, standards, assessments and resources.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 71% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on indicators related to revisiting goals based on changing school community demographics and community expectations.

At Lyndale Elementary School, curriculum is driven by learning targets provided in a district-wide set of learning standards in multiple curricular areas. This system, called Focused-Instruction, provides a framework and assessment tools which guide our work. Educators are given flexibility to differentiate instruction, using district provided materials and/or materials that we deem necessary to help students achieve the learning targets.

Teachers are provided with multiple opportunities to learn about new teaching strategies, ideas, and resources to ensure they are providing students with developmentally-appropriate best practices. Throughout the year, Lyndale teachers participate in workshops, summer institutes focusing on literacy, math and behavior, school wide and district wide professional development days. As mentioned throughout the document, we have created data teams which are based on our School Improvement Plan, specifically focused on vocabulary acquisition, Guided Math, literacy and/or engagement. Every licensed staff member participates on a Data Team and data cycles to study student work and make improvements in our teaching strategies and student outcomes. In our data cycles, we incorporate the elements located in the Standards of Effective Instruction.

We are in the process of increasing accountability and expectations of our Data Teams, guided by our Instructional Leadership Team. We are creating teams to improve student learning through better instructional practices. Our teams can be either grade level or cross grade level based on current standards. Additionally, Lyndale has four showcases a year to highlight our improved student and teacher learning.

Though Lyndale is moderately strong in this area, improvements could be made through the increased differentiation of resources and curriculum, specifically for our diverse learner groups.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 3 – 21st Century Learners

Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement.

3B. Invest in a technology-rich culture that connects learning to the global society.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 79% gave a ranking of 4 or 5. We are constantly in the process of adding new technology and student opportunities to use the materials. We might improve our use of technology through staff development and working together to help each other.

At Lyndale Community School, we are committed to using technology to enrich and extend learning. Every classroom is equipped with a Promethean board, document camera, projector, and apple TV and at least one computer that can access the internet. This equipment, along with its supporting software, enables teachers to create detailed lesson plans with interactive activities that help students to achieve the desired learning outcomes. By mirroring their computer's screen on the Promethean board, teachers can display internet resources that extend classroom discussions.

Students have access to use technology throughout the school. There are over 250 iPads within the school. We use a sign-up sheet in Google Drive that permits all teachers equal access. There are two computer labs with seventy computers. There is a laptop cart with thirty-five laptops. Through Media classes, students learn computer safety, and word processing skills. Dependent upon the grade, they also learn about PowerPoint and Excel.

We have subscriptions with ST Math, Flocabulary, Starfall, Sumdog and other district offerings under student resources on the district website. Lyndale also invites the libraries to visit the schools to help the students learn what is available there. Students who need extra practice or want to move at a faster pace can login to further develop their skills.

Lyndale is in the process of reorganizing the locations and methods of use of the technology available so that all students have equal opportunity for technology use. There will be more professional development on how to best use technology in all academic areas. In addition, students will be taught about online safety and the ethical use of things found on the internet.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 3 – 21st Century Learners

Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement.

3C. Hire, retain and support high quality teachers.

Of the stakeholders responding, 91% gave a 4 or 5 ranking and stated that the principals, teachers and stake holders are engaged in determining how to recruit, celebrate, support and retain high-quality teachers, indicating an area of strength. With 82% of respondents who gave a 4 or 5 ranking, we need to make improvements in professional development, specifically regarding the question indicating that principals, teachers and stake holders find new resources to support creative professional development opportunities.

As a desirable place of employment, Lyndale Community School is highly sought out by many internal candidates/teachers in the Minneapolis Public Schools and external applicants. Its reputation for providing high levels of student engagement has raised the expectations and performance of both students and staff.

- Teachers at our school are afforded the opportunity to creatively interact with students. This and other administrative supports allows for constant encouraging interaction among staff. Principals at Lyndale fully understand the needs and challenges of teaching and learning, and dedicate their daily routines to helping make classrooms welcoming environments for engaged learning.
- Teachers, staff and students benefit from having very engaged parents who come daily to the school. Parents fully participate in supporting the achievement of their children, keeping lines of communication open between home and school, and taking part in the myriad of parent-involvement opportunities that are offered. For example, parents created a Read-a-thon to encourage increased levels of reading as well as for providing times for children to have fun.
- The Lyndale neighborhood community is very welcoming and safe. The school is situated in a neighborhood that is desirable for living and/or working. All grade levels take field trips to a variety of spaces in and around the school. Examples include: Painter Park for picnics and group play, the YMCA, which is also nearby and offers Water Safety Classes for fourth grade, and Highpoint Printing which offers opportunities for fourth graders to view creative visual prints.
- Teachers at Lyndale know that they are a part of a team of peers who are collaborative and caring. Each staff takes the time to invest in one another's professional growth. Teachers are professionals who demonstrate high expectations of themselves and their students, with particular focus on academic and social emotional growth. This has developed an atmosphere for students who are eager to learn and who enjoy being at school ready to learn each day.

Many teachers who teach at Lyndale have been in service to the children and families for consecutive years. This speaks to the desirability of teaching at Lyndale. Turnover of teachers is low and therefore, the environment for students, families, and staff has remained healthy and stable. When new staff members are selected to join the Lyndale School "family," they are

School name: _____ District name and number: _____

inducted to strong and successful rituals and routines. Teachers serve as valuable mentors to newer staff. New staff bring a fresh perspective to their teams and sharing among teachers takes place each day during common preparation time or each week during professional learning communities (PLC's).

All staff including administrators value the shared leadership and input when hiring decisions are being made. Staff are invited to participate in interviews, review resumes, and share input when new candidates for positions are being considered. High quality teacher candidates are drawn to Lyndale School because of the progressive, consistent instructional practices and the collegial fellowship.

As mentioned, we need to improve on expanding our professional development opportunities to be more relevant and creative. The Instructional Leadership Team and administration continuously work together to improve upon PD and ensure that it meets the needs of our community.

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Standard 3 – 21st Century Learners

Demand content and instruction that ensure student achievement.

3D. Ensure rigorous, appropriate and relevant instruction for all students.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to ensuring rigorous, appropriate, and relevant instruction for all students.

Every grade level has a scope and sequence. This work is ongoing and a work in progress. Each grade level reviews their work at the beginning of the school year and end of the school year. During the year, the teams align their work to any new school/district goals, state and national standards. Resource and support staff is also part of this work as they work so closely with the classroom teacher and support the students in their learning.

All teams engage in “backwards planning” as part of their data team work. Teachers are looking at the benchmarks in relationship to student understanding and then they plan their instruction and interventions to meet those benchmark goals. Always asking the questions to each other, “What worked? What can be added to improve the outcomes? Are there any supplemental materials that can be purchased? Do we need professional development in any area?”

We also have monies available to us through Q-Comp, in which teachers can observe other teachers to get insight and feedback from others doing the same work. Looking at student work is a significant part of our professional practice. Staff has been trained in looking at student work to determine the academic rigor of assignments and their alignment with state and national standards. As mentioned, looking at student work is also embedded into our bimonthly Data Team Cycles. Student work is a rich source of information about learning. Questions that teachers ask when looking at student work: Is the work aligned to the standards? Is the task in line with the team’s scope and sequence? Were students actively engaged when demonstrating knowledge to perform the task? What instructional tasks precede this work and what will follow it? What is the same or different across the sample of student work?

We also ask the critical questions from DuFour’s work: What do we expect our students to learn? (goals) How will we know they are learning it? (assessments), how will we respond when they don’t learn? (interventions), how do we respond to the students who already know it? (advanced learners), and it is imperative that we have frequent celebrations to celebrate the progress and success for all students! One of the celebrations is a grade level showcase.

To improve rigorous and relevant instruction Data Teams will continue to be led and monitored by the Instructional Leadership Team. The ILT will monitor and make sure that all SMART goals are standard based and lead to relevant instruction. The Standards of Effective Instruction also incorporate the use of rigorous and relevant instruction.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 4 – Quality Instruction

Create a culture of continuous learning for adults,
Tied to student learning and other school goals.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 4 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (Indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (Indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

4A. Invest in comprehensive professional development for all adults to support student learning.

4B. Align the school-wide professional development plan with school and learning goals.

4C. Encourage adults to broaden networks to bring new knowledge and resources to learning environments.

4D. Provide time, structure and opportunities for adults to plan, work, reflect and celebrate together to improve practice.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 4 – Quality Instruction

Create a culture of continuous learning for adults, tied to student learning and other school goals.

4A. Invest in comprehensive professional development for all adults to support student learning.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on three indicators related to comprehensive professional development. Our success in this standard is due to the work we have accomplished this year in terms of quality professional development.

Professional development for our staff is an important part of supporting adult and student learning and we have implemented bi-weekly PD into our school year, in addition to the full and half-day PD opportunities throughout the year. Our yearly professional development plan included various PD opportunities in which staff participated. All staff participated in pre-fall planning around Positive School-Wide Engagement, Racial Equity, and Second Step (social skills curriculum). Throughout the year, we have focused on specific Professional Development led by Math Specialist, reading Specialists, English Learner Teachers, Classroom Teachers, and Administrators. These opportunities have included: Vocabulary Instruction, Word Walls, Guided Math structure and differentiation, and RISA (academic conversation structure for students).

We have implemented a vocabulary acquisition model to align with our SIP goal. English Learner teachers led professional development for this and helped all teachers design and create unique ways to help student acquire academic and content vocabulary. The training was relevant to most staff and this is reflected in our data.

Our Math Specialists led professional development about differentiating within the guided math structure to help improve our SIP goal for this area. Staff were guided through collaborative professional development to plan and see examples for how to differentiate within the different stations. Feedback was strong for this professional development using our exit slip data from the training. This professional development positively impacted our results on the self-study data.

Something we can do to improve on these trainings is make sure they are relevant for all staff, not just classroom teachers. We can include ways in the future for how support staff can utilize the model to help the classroom teachers differentiate instruction.

We also provided training on word walls and how to purposefully design them. This training was also geared towards classroom teachers, however, other support staff and specialists could benefit from knowing how to help students interact with word walls in the classrooms. A follow-up training could be a next step for improving this area that focuses on how all staff can use the word walls that are now created.

We assess learning through data meetings, coaching by math/literacy coaches and other teacher leaders, surveys, and our Data Team Celebrations. At the end of our Data cycles, the sharing celebration provides us the time to share learning and reflect on our practices and to learn from our colleagues. This has led the ILT to create and design specific professional development

School name: _____ District name and number: _____

throughout the year. This is something that we can continue to do fluidly to improve this area of the self-study.

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Standard 4 – Quality Instruction

Create a culture of continuous learning for adults, tied to student learning and other school goals.

4B. Align the school-wide professional development plan with school and learning goals.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on three indicators related to aligning school-wide professional development plan with school and learning goals.

Lyndale is committed to the belief that all students can learn. We embrace all our students as Lyndale Leaders. We have five simple rules: Listen to and follow directions. Be responsible and respectful. Be calm and safe. Be kind. Never give up.

Students have individual goals to work towards throughout the year. An example of this is in reading. Students all have an individual goal for themselves so that they can reach the end of year benchmark. Teachers formally assess students in reading level two times a year. Teachers informally assess students reading level by conferring and while students participate in their guided reading groups. During the MCA testing, students are given a goal and a reward for reaching that goal.

As mentioned, Lyndale Community School has a School Improvement Plan (SIP) with goals for reading, math and engagement. We are working on vocabulary, and guided math. We meet weekly, alternating PD with Data Cycles. The SIP is monitored by both the Instructional Leadership team and the Site Council, and is also posted on our school website. The Instructional Leadership Team completed a progress review of the SIP in January and communicated this to the Site Council. The goals on the SIP are developed based upon the learning needs and academic growth of students by analyzing state, district and school data.

Professional development is evaluated with regard to teacher practices and student performance. To improve our school-wide professional development plan and learning goals, we create a professional development plan that is turned into the district to ensure we are following the guidelines set forth by the district. Staff development is based upon the needs of our students, as determined by the Instructional Leadership Team and student data. Lyndale teachers also had the opportunity to sign up for mini-lessons on different instructional strategies and were encouraged to determine an expertise area in which they could help other teachers.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 4 – Quality Instruction

Create a culture of continuous learning for adults, tied to student learning and other school goals.

4C. Encourage adults to broaden networks to bring new knowledge and resources to learning environments.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 52% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to encouraging adults to broaden networks to bring new knowledge and resources to learning environments. Roughly 9% of the respondents had indicated that they had no basis for judgment. This is an area of improvement for Lyndale staff members. At Lyndale Elementary School, we use our Q comp dollars to allow us time for co-planning among teachers that co-teach or share students. Q comp dollars also allow us time for collaboration meetings with ELL teachers, special education teachers, math/literacy specialists and anyone else that we utilize in the classroom during the day to differentiate instruction. Q-comp dollars have also been used to pay for training in areas teachers need more support in, such as Writing Workshop. Parents have organized parent meetings and playdates to invite new parents to our school community. Lyndale also hosts four evening events where parents and teachers work together to lead the events, building connections between families, community and staff.

An area of improvement would be to broaden our use of technology and community members to access national and international networks to improve instruction and student performance.

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Standard 4 – Quality Instruction

Create a culture of continuous learning for adults, tied to student learning and other school goals.

4D. Provide time, structure and opportunities for adults to plan, work, reflect and celebrate together to improve practice.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 75% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on three indicators related to providing time, structure and opportunities for adults to plan, work, reflect, and celebrate together. As mentioned, Lyndale staff actively participates in Data Teams throughout the year. We experimented with vertically aligning some teams to specifically focus in on our SIP goals. We created vertically aligned math, reading, and science teams to focus on Guided Math implementation and vocabulary acquisition and strategies. The Data Teams look at reading and math data to improve/change instruction and create groupings for our students so that differentiation is taking place. Each cycle, Data Teams work on specific goals using baseline data, strategies, and post test data. We analyze attainment of goals and the process involved. We celebrate our data process four times per year, during which we share and highlight strategies that are working and use data to prove it.

Our Site Leadership Council consists of principals, staff, parents, and community members. They work together for the good of the school and students, looking at current school issues and assisting the principals with the budget and the School Improvement Plan.

At the beginning of each school year the principals give the parents and community members a “State of the School” address. The presentation gives attendees the data resulting from formal testing, curriculum changes, and any changes in the school over the last year, as well as what to expect in the near future in regards to school policy, testing, and other factors affecting the school community.

Our PTO meetings are very active. We also have specific meetings with our Hispanic population, and Somali Population to provide equity across the PTO organization. They meet monthly to maintain awareness of school events and culture. The principals report regularly on specific school agendas items. The PTO oversees financial and volunteer help at Lyndale Community School events. The PTO implemented a read-a-thon fundraiser this year to encourage reading. The PTO uses money from fundraising to help fund field trips and extra classroom items. The PTO helps recruit volunteers for activities in the classroom that need extra help, and to help out during and after school events. The PTO manages a Lyndale Fund. This year they purchased many musical instruments for our band and orchestra. They also were influential in acquiring donations for a new piano in the music room.

During the summer break, our staff attends trainings offered by the Minneapolis Public Schools. We send representatives to the summer institutes for ILT, Racial Equity and Positive School Wide Behavior Management. Classroom teachers go the summer literacy and math trainings. During these Professional Development trainings, teachers have opportunities to work and plan together.

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Our administrators and teacher leaders on the ILT also encourage and lead extended-time planning during and after school throughout the year to plan for various topics using Q-Comp funds. We have grade level teams meet to plan and differentiate curriculum, plan intervention, and create thematic projects. Groups of staff meet together to plan across the grades, and discuss topics such as departmentalizing and curriculum compacting.

Something we can do to improve in this area is make sure we include all staff (specialist, associate educators, etc.) in these opportunities to plan during extended time.



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 5 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

5A. Make performance data a primary driver for school improvement.

5B. Measure student, adult and school performance using a variety of data.

5C. Build capacity of adults and students to use knowledge effectively to make decisions.

5D. Benchmark high-achieving schools with comparable demographics.

5E. Make results transparent to the entire school community.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

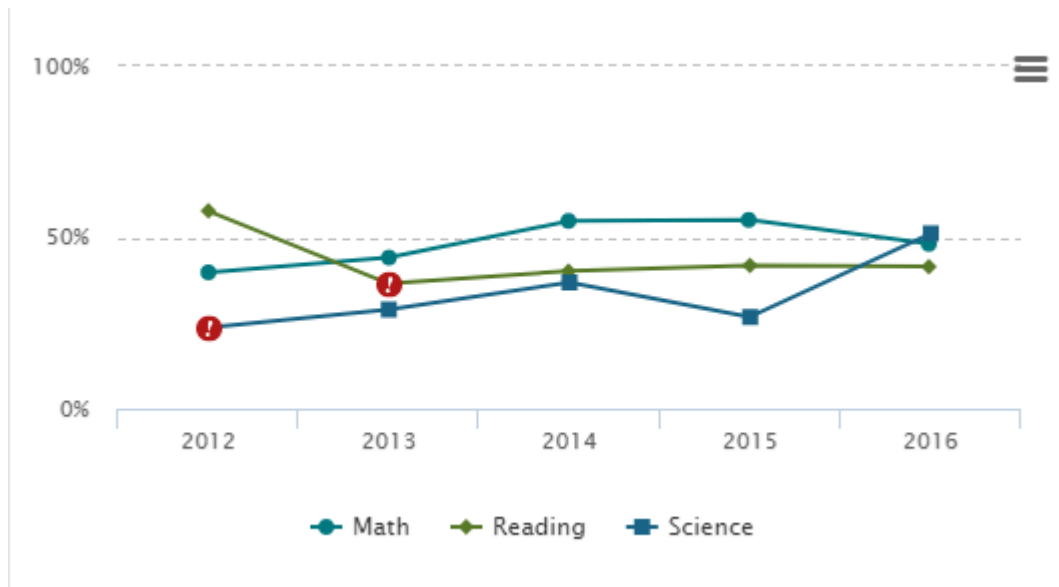
Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5A. – 5E.

Attach data summaries to support your conclusions.

- You do not need a separate data summary for each strategy.
- At a minimum, attach Minnesota Department of Education MCA data. If you choose, you also may include your district or NWEA data.

Historical MCA Data: Lyndale Community School



School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5A. Make performance data a primary driver for school improvement.

Lyndale Elementary School uses many sources of data to drive our instruction and school wide improvement. We use NWEA MAP data for first through fifth grade in the areas of math and reading. It is used to identify specific strands in which students need additional support in math and/or reading. This allows teachers to see how students are performing in comparison to others in the district and nationally.

Additionally, every fall, winter, and spring teachers use the Fountas and Pinnell (F & P) assessment to determine each student's individual reading level to help plan for guided reading group instruction. The F & P is also used internally to measure student growth in reading. Also, grade levels utilize District Interim Assessments to assess students on reading quarterly and with the help of Illuminate software provides immediate data reports which helps students and teachers respond to academic needs in a timely fashion.

In addition, kindergarten uses team-created assessments to determine which students are meeting their grade level achievement targets. All grade levels k-5 use grade level interim assessments to determine growth toward grade level standards and benchmarks. Kindergarten and some of first grade students use the Concepts of Math (COM) assessment to determine individual gains in the ten key areas of math in a 1 to 1 testing setting.

Data Teams drive classroom-level investigation of specific standards in the classroom. Teachers pre-assess and then develop an instructional plan to move students towards proficiency in the standards. Teams meet every two weeks to talk about progress and areas of concern and to evaluate student work. After 4 to 6 weeks, the team will give students a post-assessment and decide on next steps for students.

Finally, we use MCA data to measure student performance in math, reading, and science (5th Grade), along with evaluating school effectiveness. Although the MCA test is not our only form of school evaluation, the standardized tool is a sign of growth or regression in students who are at Lyndale over the years. It has been demonstrated that our students grow while at Lyndale and although many ELs don't meet proficiency by the time they leave us, the district has shown data that indicates those students achieve proficiency in middle school. Lyndale, based on consistent data examination, is providing the foundation for future learning.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 93% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on the two indicators related to make sure results are transparent to our community. This data indicates our stakeholders feel our data is accessible and available. An area to improve on would be making data known to students and using it to set goals.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5B. Measure student, adult and school performance using a variety of data.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 80% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to measuring student, adult, and school performance using a variety of data. Lyndale Community School uses multiple measures to determine performance for both students and staff.

We analyze our data for our School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals in reading, math, and climate. SIP goals are communicated to the staff at the start of our workshop week before the new school year. We also share this data with our school community at the “State of the Schools” address at our annual open house. Our Site Leadership Team (consisting of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members) is continuously informed as our SIP goals change and track progress. The SIP looks deeper into the data using research-based strategies to support the necessary instructional changes to increase student achievement. Our staff has buy in around vocabulary instruction, guided math, and behavior/attendance goals per our SIP. We have seen growth on MAP testing, as well as Kindergarten Concepts of Math (CoM) tests. At Lyndale, the SIP is a “living” and changing document.

Our kindergarten classrooms use the Concepts of Math (COM) to evaluate students’ growth in math for kindergarten. We use the MAP for first and second grade in evaluating our math practices. We measure student growth using the MAP data and compare this growth to high and low achieving students. We noticed that our high achieving students were not making as much growth. In response to this data, Lyndale decided to implement the Guided Math model into all classrooms. This has been used as a tool to help ensure that we differentiate instruction by purposefully grouping students within math. This has allowed students who are high achieving/low growth to be challenged, while other groups can receive the differentiated instruction geared towards their needs. Our math specialists have overseen the implementation and provided the necessary professional development.

We also use student WIDA scores for our English learner students to assess their English proficiency growth in speaking, listening, reading, and writing each year. This data allows our grade level teams to work in unison with our EL teachers and focus on differentiating groups (both push-in and pull-out) for literacy, science, and social studies instruction. This data helps us work with our newcomers and students with the highest English needs, as well as our students who exit from EL status. This data also helps us connect with our MCA, MAP, and other district assessments to track our EL students and provide them with interventions when reviewing RTI procedures throughout the year.

We begin each year by evaluating our Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) data to design our program to meet the needs of all students in third through fifth grade. Staff collaborates to plan standards based instruction. We focus mid-year on Response to Intervention

School name: _____ District name and number: _____

and make sure that students who are struggling receive some form of intervention (ALC, Do The Math, reading programs, etc.).

Improvements in this area include more opportunities and variety of data for teacher and student self-assessment and reflection.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5C. Build capacity of adults and students to use knowledge effectively to make decisions.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 79% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to building capacity for adults and students to use knowledge effectively for decision making. We have several data points that help teachers inform and drive instructional choices. Teachers use this data to plan and reteach material to students to reach proficiency. We use the data gathered through NWEA MAP, MCA's, interim assessments, Fountas and Pinnell Baseline Reading Assessment, unit assessments, and pre- and post-assessments developed for our Data Teams. Teachers also use a variety of formative assessments daily, which may include exit slips or conferring.

An area for improvement includes better communicating results to students. Future work includes conferencing with students about scores and goal setting. Using this process, we will teach students about their current level, grade level expectations, and individual goal setting.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5D. Benchmark high-achieving schools with comparable demographics.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 68% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on the indicator related to benchmarking high achieving school with comparable demographics. We had 25% of our respondents indicate that they had no basis for judgment.

Through the use of Tableau, a data platform used by the Minneapolis Public Schools, stakeholders have been able to analyze and examine academic, attendance, and engagement trends not only at Lyndale, but throughout the entirety of our district. Tableau has enabled our principals, members of our Instructional Leadership Team, and members of our community to systematically identify successful schools with comparable demographics.

Once these schools have been identified, it allows building leaders and staff to engage in conversation surrounding the administrative operations and instructional practices they are using. Most recently, staff from Lyndale worked in conjunction with district leadership, and the math team from Anne Sullivan Academy, to enhance the implementation of the guided math model used by the Minneapolis Public Schools. The result of this partnership was the restructuring of grade level schedules that allowed more time for mathematics instruction, and modifications to the approaches used by classroom teachers.

Through conversations with fellow principals, the administrative team at Lyndale has identified the need to prioritize the needs of our English Language Learners. In years past, we have funded more EL teaching positions than we have been allocated by the Minneapolis Public Schools. By having a EL teacher dedicated to each grade level, all learners are able to benefit from strategic instruction designed to strengthen their language acquisition skills.

Also, as a building, we have identified explicit vocabulary instruction as a powerful lever in accelerating student learning across the content areas. Teacher teams have created plans to identify words essential to understanding, methods for teaching individual words, and ways in which they can create enthusiasm for word learning inside their classrooms. Our focus on explicit vocabulary instruction is written into our School Improvement Plan, and we have continuously monitored the implementation of research based strategies.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 5 – Knowledge and Data

Manage knowledge and data to inform decisions and measure progress of student, adult, and school performance.

5E. Make results transparent to the entire school community.

In the survey, 70% of the respondents scored this area 4 or a 5. There were about 7% of respondents that scored no basis for judgement. Based upon this information, the Instructional Leadership Team at Lyndale, in conjunction with our Site Council, will explore innovative approaches to communicating to our outside community how we plan to increase student performance.

Lyndale Community School believes that it is our responsibility to initiate, and maintain frequent, ongoing communication with students, families, and staff regarding school results data.

Building administration and members of the instructional leadership team communicate school result data to building staff throughout the course of the school year in a variety of formats. Both our Math and Literacy specialists provide teachers and teams with relevant data that informs planning and instructional approaches.

Teachers keep individual families informed of student results data during our biannual parent-teacher conferences. Over the course of the past 5 years, upwards of 90% of families have attended parent teacher conferences. Lyndale utilizes outside interpreter agencies to ensure that families are able to interface with their teachers to better understand their student performance.

In addition to the State of the School address and PTO, possible opportunities to make results transparent to the entire community include neighborhood forums and language specific parent meetings.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for Student performance and development.

What results did your school community demonstrate for Standard 6 in your MN School of Excellence Application Part 1 (Self-Study)?

Let the self-study guide your growth. For each strategy on the following pages, show concretely using brief narratives to cite examples of:

- How your school carried out the self-study process.
- Results demonstrated from building on the strengths evident in your self-study (indicators ranked 4 or 5);
- Plans for improvement to address areas that were not as strong (indicators ranked 1 or 2); and
- Results from the implementation of your plans.

6A. Engage parents, families and the community to build relationships that support improved performance.

6B. Serve as civic leaders who regularly engage with numerous stakeholders to support students, families and schools in more effective ways.

6C. Shape partnerships to ensure multiple learning opportunities for students, in and out of school.

6D. Market the school's distinctive learning environment and results to inform parents' choices of options that best fit their children's needs.

6E. Advocate for high-quality education for every student.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development.

6A. Engage parents, families and the community to build relationships that support improved performance.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 59% scored a 4 or a 5 and agree that Lyndale principal, teachers and involved volunteers regularly engage with stakeholders to expand relationships and participation.

Lyndale’s administration, dedicated volunteer coordinator, bilingual program assistants and staff work together with our community partners and PTO to engage families to build a strong relationship.

Our principals, teachers, and school staff regularly volunteer in school events and activities and engage with stakeholders to expand relationships with their families. Principals and bilingual staff regularly participate in PTO meetings.

We host grade-level curriculum nights where teachers are given the opportunity to communicate to parents the curriculum, grade-level events and expectations.

Our volunteer coordinator works closely with community members to ensure the highest level of participation and relationship building. The Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) internal coach supervises two full time college-educated members who are giving a year of service to Lyndale.

In addition to them implementing the MRC protocols, they further strengthen their relationships by volunteering at Lyndale’s evening events and helping in the classrooms. In addition to their daily responsibilities, they will be implementing a grant supported program called “Bookshelf Builders” in which each K-3 student in the program will receive three books to begin building their own home library and to develop stronger connections to the school library and other literacy activities taking place within the school.

MRC also works to build bridges with families through the “Read-at-Home” program which encourages students to practice reading skills at home that they learned at school.

Lyndale School also collaborates with Reading Partners (RP). They recruit 73 volunteers on a weekly basis to read one-on-one with a student identified by the classroom teacher. They use their own curriculum that is aligned to common core. They work with students that are anywhere from one month to two years behind in literacy skills, meeting the child where they are at. Additionally, the students can take one book home for every session they attend to build their own home library. Often, these volunteers will attend Lyndale’s assemblies to provide support for their new friend. Moreover, RP hosts a winter and end-of-year celebration.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____

Lyndale can improve in this area by establishing more relationships with parents and community members, and also by communicating to community members and families about the partnerships we have at Lyndale school.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development.

6B. Serve as civic leaders who regularly engage with numerous stakeholders to support students, families and schools in more effective ways.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 95% agreed that our parents, teachers and staff are visible participants in community efforts, identifying, advocating for, and securing supports for students and families.

Lyndale principals, students, PTO and staff volunteer their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to engage and support our students and families. Twenty fourth- and fifth-graders applied to become media assistants. These students give up one recess a week to help shelf books, create displays and general cleaning for Lyndale’s media center.

Lyndale also has a student council. These 22 classroom representatives serve as leaders and role models for all students. They were elected by their peers for their leadership skills. They organize and run such activities as school spirit week and Earth Day clean up.

R.O.T. Reduce Our Trash - This is our community recycling and composting program that encourages to sort their trash responsibly. Students at all grade levels sort trash, organics and recyclables, and also compost extra snack in the classrooms. Student volunteers at the fourth and fifth grade levels collect the classroom bins, assist the younger grades with sorting and redistribute extra snacks to the afterschool program. This “Green Team” serves their community in a way that is not only meaningful but effective. Thanks to the work of our student volunteers and teachers, Lyndale diverts almost 90% of our waste in the lunchroom to recycling or organics.

For several years Lyndale has had a team of seven students running a weekly bookstore selling gently used books. The students are responsible for setting up, selling, and promoting their store. These leaders help others find high interest books or books at the student’s reading level. They are responsible for taking donations and leveling them for ease of shopping.

We partner with the Sheridan Project to help students and their families who may need additional assistance with food over the weekend. The school social worker, along with classroom teachers, identify students who would benefit from this service.

Lyndale has 25 student school patrols. They were chosen from the essay they wrote defining responsibility. The expectation is that they demonstrate leadership and are a visible presence of traffic control.

Lyndale participated in a national anti-bullying movement called “Kindness in Chalk” to raise bullying awareness and start an anti-bullying movement. The idea is to combat bullying with meaningful words and a piece of chalk.

School name: _____ District name and number: _____



Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development.

6C. Shape partnerships to ensure multiple learning opportunities for students, in and out of school.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 86% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on the indicator related to shaping partnerships to provide multiple learning opportunities for students in and out of school. Our strong tradition of partnerships with community groups, parents/PTO and the school (staff and teachers) ensure that our students have multiple learning opportunities to shape the whole child both in and out of school.

Lyndale Elementary is located in the Uptown area of Minneapolis, a place nationally renowned for the arts. This location has provided an excellent opportunity for our school to partner with some of the top artistic institutions in the country including the Children’s Theatre, Minneapolis Institute of Arts and Highpoint Center for Printmaking. These outside partnerships have allowed our students unique opportunities not afforded to other children in our district or state.

The Children’s Theatre Company (CTC), located minutes from our school, has been an outstanding partner for many years. Lyndale School is a charter member of the “Neighborhood Bridges” program developed by the CTC ten years ago. Each week three professional teaching artists from the Children’s Theatre spend over 2 hours in each of our third-grade classrooms using storytelling and creative drama to help children develop their critical literacy skills. As a result of this partnership, students are not only taught drama skills by professional directors, they also have the opportunity to attend a professional performance by the Children’s Theatre and get to perform their own plays on the main stage of the Children’s Theatre for the “Crossing Bridges” theater festival each year. In collaboration with the Bridges program, drama students from Breck High School serve as mentors and assist our students in developing their own stories into plays. Third grade students and their parents annually rate Bridges as one of the most valuable experiences for students at Lyndale Elementary.

Highpoint Center for the Printmaking is another exceptional partnership within walking distance of our school. Students learn printmaking from professional printers. They explore scientific or literary themes and create prints based upon those themes. Our students have used the skills learned from Highpoint printmaking for display during our annual “Arts Extravaganza.” Teachers have utilized the prints as topics for writing and poetry and used this experience as part of the yearly “4th grade showcase” to display their learning to the Lyndale families.

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) partners with Lyndale school to provide volunteer docents who teach “Visual Thinking Strategies” to students. Each week for one month, the docents bring examples of art from the museum and engage students in questioning strategies to help students learn to observe, look closely and think critically about pieces of art. In conjunction with this program, students visit the MIA where they are afforded the opportunity to put their visual thinking strategies to use. They are always invited back to visit this museum that is free and located in their own neighborhood, providing excellent exposure to a local educational institution.

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In addition to the outside community partnerships, the Lyndale staff and parents do much to encourage multiple learning opportunities within the building. The PTO fundraises annually to provide instruments for the 4th and 5th grade band and orchestra. Over 100 students learn an instrument each year at Lyndale Elementary and their fundraising is critical to that high participation rate. Our Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-Carnival night, where students display STEM inspired games created by partner groups during the school day are evaluated by PTO volunteers and supported by the Science Museum of Minnesota along with the Bakken Museum of Minneapolis. Parents and teachers work together after school to participate alongside Lyndale students in the “Girls on The Run” program that encourages a positive, fun and healthy experienced-based curriculum through running.

Our dedicated teachers support a variety of enrichment opportunities that provide student learning opportunities beyond the standard classroom curriculum. Grade-level showcase performances each month allow students to display their learning through creative use of song, dance and drama. Our weekly enrichment “BASE” period provides students with a chance to self-select an enrichment class that matches their interests. During this time, teachers provide a multitude of high-interest project-based enrichment classes such as photography, computer programming, lego engineering, bookmaking and yoga. Our teachers initiated GEMS and GISE afterschool programming to bring a science and engineering curriculum into the schools, and the students have been competing in district-wide Lego League tournaments as a result of this curriculum. Our strong music and art departments provide additional opportunities for our students to showcase their talents. The second- and third-grade choir helps students foster an interest in singing. Our annual Arts Extravaganza gives students a full day to display and explain their artistic talents or show their skills as an artist, singer, musician or dancer.

The school, teachers and parents also lead a variety of out-of-school learning opportunities with the belief that experiential learning brings benefits to students. All students look forward to 5th grade when they can spend a “Night at the Museum” at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Students in other grades visit the Mill City Museum, Bakken Museum, the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the Minnesota Zoo, Kelley Historic Farm, Sea Life Aquarium, Children’s Museum and the Minneapolis Institute of Art, in addition to others. Parents and staff annually run together with students in the Twin Cities Kids Marathon weekend events held in St. Paul each October.

Our exceptional community partners, parent involvement and dedicated staff combine to create a valuable learning experience for Lyndale students. The multitude of programs and our location in the same neighborhood as so many artistic and cultural venues gives our students a special opportunity to learn more about the world around them. The varied curriculum and programming within the building allows our students to develop and display their own unique talents.

No respondents gave a ranking of below average on these indicators, however as a school, we could do a better job of assessing the effectiveness of the community partnerships and communicating that information to our staff, family and community members so that all stakeholders are more widely aware of the many community partners that benefit our students.

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Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development.

6D. Market the school’s distinctive learning environment and results to inform parents’ choices of options that best fit their children’s needs.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 84% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on two indicators related to marketing the school’s distinctive learning environment and results to inform parents’ choices of options that best fit their children’s needs. As mentioned throughout the application, Lyndale has many examples of how we support the distinctive learners at Lyndale and communicate to parents what we can offer to their children.

Lyndale holds weekly tours for prospective families and highlights for parents the different options and diversity of learners at our school. Second, we attend organized events in the community like Open Streets, where staff and parents talk with prospective families and members of the larger community about the successes at our neighborhood school. Third, each grade at Lyndale hosts a “showcase” in which students perform for families and the community by highlighting an academic area through dramatic performance. These events are a highlight for current parents and an expression for our student’s learning. Fourth, our principal hosts a “stay and chat” event once a week where parents can discuss informally with the principal the current state of the school.

Lyndale is active and visible in the local community. Staff members write monthly articles updating the community on events and stories about Lyndale students for the Lyndale Neighborhood Association newspaper and the school consistently hosts events in the neighborhood like the Lyndale Open House and Cinco de Mayo events. Our mural project collaboration with the Minnesota State Arts Board involved staff, families, community members and students in the development and creation of a large public mural on the school. This mural not only demonstrates Lyndale’s celebration of the arts but also highlights our diversity and academic focus in the local community.

Additionally, we have a sign located at the corner of school’s busiest intersection. This sign is consistently updated to share with current families and the community the events happening at the school during the month. Families in the community also show their blue “Lyndale” lawn signs to show support for their community school and demonstrate pride in their local neighborhood school. Most importantly, parents in the community have organized a Walking School Bus at Lyndale that supports students walking to school each Friday. The Walking School Bus has even organized a different bus drop off so that students who don’t live close enough can also participate by walking for blocks with their school community. This program started at Lyndale and is now being replicated in other parts of the district by the parents who initiated it at Lyndale. Finally, students at Lyndale are supported in their learning with after-school enrichment opportunities including, LEGOs/robotics, Boys on a Bike, Girls on the Run, Youth Farm, Rocketry, GEMs and GISE and Sports. Finally, events like Arts Extravaganza Day (a Lyndale original), STEM Carnival, Spelling Bee, Lyndale Math Challenge and Children’s Theater

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Performances allow students to showcase their work and special talents in ways that support the whole learner and encourage them to explore and foster all abilities and interests.

Areas of improvement include more fundraising, advocacy and recruiting of students. Our fundraising partners, including our parent partnerships should be strengthened. By improving our outcomes with current advocates we can utilize our parents to support special programs to advocate for more funding at the school and District level. Our Site Council is very politically active and could help to bring Lyndale's issues to the local and state level. Additionally, we have noticed that many Hispanic students in the neighborhood are choosing other school options and we are working with the Site Council and Spanish-speaking family liaisons to improve our neighborhood retention of these students and families.

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Standard 6 – Community Engagement

Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student performance and development.

6E. Advocate for high-quality education for every student.

Of the stakeholders who responded to survey questions in this area, 88% gave a ranking of 4 or 5 on the indicator related to advocating for high quality education for every student. School administration, teachers, and parents are strong advocates for maintaining the funding and resources needed to support each student’s educational success. Administration, Site Council, and PTO have actively work to inform parents on school district funding decisions and involve staff and parent groups on budgetary priorities when the annual budget is being developed.

The PTO’s vocal and monetary support for Arabic language instruction, band, orchestra, choir and after-school opportunities has allowed our school to not only maintain basic educational services but also provide high quality educational opportunities for all our students. At Lyndale, our band, orchestra, choir, Rope Power, Boys on Bike, Girls on the Run, Lego Robotics, and other groups have high enrollment because everyone in the school community believes these opportunities should be available to as many students as possible.

Lyndale also supports a several programs that bring human resources to the school via volunteering or otherwise. These programs and individual volunteers help ensure more one on one time for students who need the extra help. Experience Corps, Reading Corps, Junior Achievement and community volunteers have created an environment where teachers have consistent help from parents and programs that ensures a high-quality education for all our students. In addition, Lyndale is a site that hosts prospective teachers in the “Grow Your Own” teacher residency program through Minneapolis Public Schools, along with student teachers from Hamline University, University of Minnesota, and St. Cloud State. Our annual Volunteer Tea to is one of our largest morning events we have, which celebrates and shows appreciation for the extra people who help ensure a high-quality education for all students.

Lyndale School teachers and staff realize that the community is a partner in the process of providing a high-quality education for all students. By organizing and accepting the volunteer and program support in their classrooms, teachers can differentiate the learning experience for more students to ensure that every student gets what they need every day. This does not happen without the valuable community engagement apparent at Lyndale School every day.

Finally, a high-quality education must involve opportunities to showcase academic ability and challenge learning to new levels. One of Lyndale’s most popular and successful after school programs is Lego Robotics. Students are afforded the opportunity to push their math and science to new levels in this program and compete with other schools. The Lyndale Math Challenge and Spelling Bees offer students an individual opportunity to showcase their specific academic skill sets. And as the only elementary school in the state with Arabic language classes, Lyndale is not only supporting the cultural groups present in our building, but also challenging students think about language differently.

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At Lyndale, we believe a high-quality education involves the whole student and not just test scores. The community, teachers, staff and volunteers all use data to inform instruction but that alone does not make our school a leader in quality education. What makes Lyndale a leader in this area is all the other commitments we make to our students' learning experience. Whether it is an overnight trip to the Science Museum of Minnesota or Water Safety class at the YMCA, Lyndale is creating experiences and opportunities for students to get a truly well-rounded education.

Although Lyndale provides opportunities for students to achieve in different areas, this is still an area where we can collaborate and coordinate better. Better interventions and parent meetings when students begin to struggle or act out could help alleviate academic frustration in students. Improving our processes for identifying students who are struggling either behaviorally or academically will allow for more discussion about solutions for each individual student. Documenting interventions and identifying students who struggle could be a great addition to weekly team meetings to ensure consistent discussion about students across colleagues.

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Next Steps

Plans for Improvement

1C. Capitalize on the Leadership Skills of Others

- A. Staff leaders, which include administrators, teachers, and associate educators, will attend both the Language and Literacy Institute, as well as the ILT Institute, during the summer of 2017 in an effort to be more responsive and adaptive to our student learning needs.
- B. Lyndale Community School will empower classroom teachers to lead professional development during the 2017-2018 school year on the implementation of best practices in their classrooms.

4C. Encourage adults to broaden networks to bring new knowledge and resources to learning environments.

- A. Our Instructional and Curriculum Specialists will seek out strategies which have proven to be successful in schools with similar demographics within our district and at the state level.
- B. Administrators will utilize the MESPA network to communicate with other colleagues from around the state to learn about other promising practices.
- C. Teachers and Associate Educators will use their collaborative unions to discuss strong instructional practices and bring this information to Instructional leadership Teams (ILT).

4D. Provide time, structure and opportunities for adults to plan, work, reflect and celebrate together to improve practice.

- A. During our professional development staff will engage in activities that focus on examining their own biases utilizing the Courageous Conversations framework created by Glenn Singleton .
- B. Teacher teams will meet weekly to plan standards based instruction aimed at increasing the academic achievement of all learners and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts as data teams.

6A. Engage parents, families and the community to build relationships that support improved performance.

- A. Families, Staff, and Community Members will engage in discussion during professional development at the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year to better understand how they can work in partnership to improve the performance of all students.
- B. Lyndale Community School will host parent meetings in English, Spanish, and Somali in the Fall, Winter, and Spring of the 2017-2018 school year. These meetings will keep families informed as to what is happening within the school, and how they can support student learning at home.

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