

The Options Program Handbook

Lincoln Options Elementary School

***A Community Committed to Learning, Kindness, and
Celebration***

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I. History

A. The Options Program

The Options Program is a district-wide alternative elementary program in the Olympia School District (OSD).

The program began as two multi-age classrooms at McKinley Elementary School in September 1984. It represented the initiative and efforts of Citizens for Educational Alternatives, a group organized in 1980 by families interested in alternative education and more active family involvement and responsibility. The group had first submitted a proposal to the Olympia School Board in November 1980. However, the proposal wasn't approved until April 1984. More classrooms were added in the fall of 1985 and 1987. In 1988, with the addition of a kindergarten and an intermediate classroom, Options became a full-track program. That same fall it was moved to Lincoln School, where it shared the building with a program serving the Lincoln service area.

By Olympia School Board action in the spring of 1995, Lincoln became a one-program school offering the Options Program to Olympia-area students and Lincoln service-area families. Olympia School District provides transportation to Pioneer Elementary for Lincoln service-area families who do not choose the Options Program at Lincoln.

The Options Program encourages active family participation and offers an educational choice for families in the Olympia School District.

B. The Lincoln School Building

Designed by architect Joseph Wohleb, Lincoln was opened in 1922. The school, which is listed on the State Register of Historic Places, has deep roots in the South Capitol district. It was closed for renovation in 1993-94 and reopened in the fall of 1994.

II. Philosophy and Overview

We believe that...

- Each child is a unique being, developing at an individual pace, and with distinct interests.
- Curiosity and creativity are innate in all children, and a school can enhance the child's natural drive to explore and experiment in the real world.
- Thought and expression develop out of experience.

Sir Alec Clegg, a contemporary English educator, said that the purpose of education "is not so much to convey knowledge as it is to excite a determination in the child to acquire it for himself and to teach him how to go about acquiring it." (Charles F. Silberman, The Open Classroom Reader)

The activities of the classroom will be related to the interests and abilities of the students, and the curriculum goals will be in line with their developmental levels. With this approach, students do not fall behind or move ahead of themselves, because they are not judged against anyone but themselves. They function successfully at the level they are developmentally ready for and move on when their personal development indicates readiness.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic will be taught within the framework of a holistic program. The classroom will reflect the potpourri of life: reading is how one finds out about that in which one is interested; math is what one uses in conducting the business of one's life; and writing is one form of communication. These skills are necessary within the framework of a complete life—at least in our society. These are not isolated subjects to be pored over for prescribed amounts of time. Rather, they are an integrated part of the pursuit of knowledge of a special or general interest by an individual or group.

Some children cannot learn to capacity, and, in fact, reject much of what is presented to them when they are in isolated settings, apart from community interests, and not in control of their direction.

Within the Options program, adult roles will be as facilitators, experience providers, assistants, resources, and guides. Children will develop skills in self-control, responsibility, and decision-making and can thereby enhance their self-image. The Options classroom provides a developmentally based curriculum that takes children from where they are “in total” and gives them opportunities and equipment to move forward at their own rates (in areas of their specific interest), enabling them to acquire life support skills (the basic education) in the process.

III. Goals

CHILDREN will be guided to achieve their full potential without pressure to compete or measure up to imposed criteria. They will:

1. Recognize and develop their creative, intuitive, feeling selves as well as their logical, analytical, rational selves.
2. Help set their own learning goals and make commitments toward achieving those goals.
3. Develop basic skills by choosing from a variety of learning activities organized in a sequential program.
4. Initiate their own learning by selecting group or individual projects based on their special interests. Grouping, when necessary, will be done according to interest, ability, and developmental level rather than by age or sex.
5. Be motivated by their innate curiosity, desire for competence, interest in finding solutions to problems, and the joy of working with people.
 - a. Competition, peer pressure, and the need for adult approval will be minimized as motivators.
 - b. Testing will be kept to a minimum.
 - c. Written evaluations, rather than grades, will be used to communicate student

progress.

CHILDREN will learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. They will:

1. Learn from each other as well as from adults, and adults will learn from them.
2. Interact with a variety of supportive adults who will provide positive role models.
3. Be encouraged to ask questions and express opinions, feelings, and information.

CHILDREN will discover that what happens at school, at home, and in the community is all part of the learning process. They will:

1. Work with families and teachers to develop their individual goals and programs.
2. See families and community members involved in the day-to-day operations of the program.
3. Take field trips and carry out projects in the community.

CHILDREN will see themselves as participants in life rather than preparing for it. They will:

1. Participate in planning their own programs and take responsibility for carrying them out.
2. Participate in developing the school's physical environment.
3. Be encouraged to use their growing knowledge in ways that are meaningful to them.

IV. Curriculum

The curriculum will include a wide variety of teacher-, student-, and family-initiated learning experiences. It will involve integration of activities that will lead to social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and aesthetic growth.

Fundamental and foremost in the conception of the learning process is the belief that social and emotional health and well-being precede intellectual development. Daily interaction will foster:

1. Mutual trust and caring between child and teacher, child and child, and child and group, and a sense of community within the school.
2. Cooperative, rather than competitive, interaction with others.
3. Respect for others' feelings, persons, property, and uniqueness, through learning to listen to and respect what others have to say.
4. Interpersonal problem solving through talking and reasoning.
5. Group problem solving.
6. Movement from the child's natural egocentricity toward greater sensitivity to others.
7. The ability to sometimes compromise individual needs for group goals.
8. Self-directed learning.
9. Working independently.
10. Being realistic in accepting one's limitations as well as one's abilities.
11. Honesty, trust, loyalty, and compassion.

Recognizing the child's physical needs, the alternative environment will provide for:

1. Large and small motor activities.
2. The use of concrete, manipulative learning materials.
3. Study of nutrition and health.
4. Freedom of movement in the classroom.

Intellectual experiences will be provided to develop the process of conceptualizing, problem solving, decision making, predicting, and creating. These experiences will include work in the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Communication skills | 6. Art |
| 2. Mathematics | 7. Music |
| 3. Social Studies | 8. Drama |
| 4. Science | 9. Industrial arts |
| 5. Physical education and health | 10. Home arts |

Wonder:

A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we can reach adulthood. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things that are artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength. (Rachel Carson, A Sense of Wonder)

Classroom atmosphere and experiences will nurture that sense of wonder and an appreciation for:

1. The wholeness of life, including birth, growth, and death.
2. Nature.
3. Design, form, color, symmetry, rhythm, and balance in nature and in art.
4. Our unique environment at school, in the community, and in the world.
5. Music, dance, drama, and other art forms.

V. Program Organization and Structure

A. The Lincoln Options Community

The Lincoln Options community consists of:

1. Children and their families enrolled at Lincoln Options
2. Community members involved with Lincoln Options
3. Employees of the Olympia School District assigned to Lincoln Options School

4. Staff and students of the Ruben Dario School in Santo Tomas, Nicaragua

B. Class Arrangement and Placement of Students

Lincoln Options has multi-age classes. The rationale for a multi-age approach is to:

1. Allow children to progress through the curriculum at their individual developmental rates.
2. Eliminate the need for retention, thereby removing any stigma of not advancing to the next grade level with peers.
3. Provide a model in which children are valued for where they are in their developmental level of learning, not their grade level.
4. Allow children to remain in the program for six to seven years, depending on their academic and/or social needs.
5. De-emphasize grade divisions within a classroom.
6. Permit children to be exposed to skill areas when they are developmentally ready.
7. Eliminate terms such as “being held back,” “above grade level” and “below grade level,” which give a child a sense of being “better than” peers, or a sense of inadequacy.
8. Reduce competition with peers but validate competition with oneself.

C. Teacher Selection

Teachers for the Options program are hired by the Olympia School District. When an opening occurs, the position is posted, and all interested teachers apply according to regular district procedures. Selection and hiring are done by a committee of staff, families, and the principal, who interview candidates and make hiring recommendations to the School District Administration. Special consideration is given to finding candidates who are compatible with the program philosophy and goals and have experience with teaching methods most suitable for the program.

D. Teacher Planning and Early Release Children’s Activity Programs

Teacher Planning Early Release was initiated so that teachers would have more group planning time for curriculum and school-wide events, and the opportunity to share resources and ideas related to instructional issues and needs. Historically teachers add ten minutes to their instruction time each day to accumulate, or “bank,” time for this planning time of approximately 14 or 15 half days per year. Since the success of this planning time was so significant, a modified version was adopted by the entire district. **As of 2021 Lincoln Options participates in the every-Wednesday early release program along with the rest of the schools in our district.**

E. Student Progress Reports

Student progress and self-evaluation are discussed throughout the school year. Frequent

contact between families and teachers provides many opportunities to learn about student progress and class activities. Families should remember to discuss their student's progress with the teacher at appropriate times. For lengthy discussions, families should schedule special appointments with the teacher. Also, like other schools in the Olympia School District, Lincoln uses the following schedule for student progress reports.

OSD scheduled fall conferences	Family-Child-Teacher goal-setting conferences
February	Written report to families via OSD report cards
OSD scheduled spring conferences	Mid-year Family-Child-Teacher goal review
Last day of school	Written report to families via OSD report cards

F. Field Trips

Options students often take field trips. These trips use both family drivers and Intercity Transit for transport. The Olympia School District requires permission slips for each student taking these trips. When a teacher or committee schedules a field trip, they will notify families. They will also send out field trip permission slips. Families must sign and return these slips before their children will be allowed to join in the field trip. Everyone riding in a private car on a field trip must wear a seat belt and those students under 4'9" must use a booster seat. Each driver must also complete an OSD [Volunteer Driver Statement](#) and have an active OSD [Volunteer Clearance](#). Both need to be renewed every September.

G. Annual Program Calendar

The Annual Program Calendar ([Event Dates - Lincoln Options](#)) gives everyone at the school a chance to see when activities will happen well in advance of the scheduled dates. This makes it easier for people organizing events to identify schedule conflicts, and to choose good times for making announcements in the school newsletter, the *Options Opus*, in school district communications, and at school events.

At the last Options Community Council (OCC or Council) meeting in June the Council will, as part of that meeting's agenda, ratify a calendar for the next school year that has been drafted by the principal and the committee chairs in advance of that meeting.

H. Budget and Fundraising

Families carry out fundraising activities to support the Options Program at Lincoln School and contribute to the school community. Fundraising events are held at the discretion of the fundraising committee, depending on funding needs and available volunteers to organize the event. There are three main types of fundraising events (below) but the exact events and their timing may vary from year to year. All donations received are fully tax deductible.

1. Program Fund Drive

Each year, the Fundraising Committee asks families to pledge to the Program Fund Drive. The Program Fund Drive was established in 1990 as a way to reduce the amount of family member time spent on fundraising activities. This is sometimes done as a direct contribution and sometimes done through the Combined Fund Drive which enables state employees to contribute directly through their paychecks. This is a pledge and payment system in which the only volunteer hours needed are those to advertise the drive and collect the funds. A companion to this drive may be the Alumni Giving Drive which invites alumni and their families to pledge to the Program Fund as well.

2. Income-Generating Fundraiser

Once a year the Fundraising Committee hosts an income-generating fundraising event. This event's main purpose is to raise funds and although it is primarily advertised to Lincoln Options families and staff, this event is meant to engage donors and participants from outside of Lincoln Options as well. While other fundraising events may be able to be mounted by an individual or small group, this event usually requires a sustained team effort.

3. Community-Building Fundraisers

The majority of our fundraising efforts also serve to build, engage, and serve the community. Community Building Fundraisers (CB) are often done with a pay-what-you-can style to increase accessibility. One example is a movie screening where ticket prices start at \$0. CB fundraisers may also have additional community support goals. One example is a used clothing sale where families can shop by donation but also school staff can access clothing for less direct needs such as having extra clothing available for students in the health room. CB fundraisers may also help to solidify our goodwill with our partners in the larger community such as other elementary schools or our neighborhood. One example is co-hosting a fundraiser with another school or program.

I. Guidance for Submitting a Proposal

Any member of the Lincoln community may bring a proposal to the OCC. A proposal to the OCC can be a request to change a policy or guideline, a request for OCC funds for a special project, or a request for other OCC support. In general, if your idea might substantially impact the community, write a proposal. If the proposal is a request for funds, the OCC Treasurer should be consulted. It is strongly suggested that you consult with the principal or OCC chair or bring your idea to an OCC meeting before preparing a proposal.

In order to bring a proposal to the OCC, you must fill out the [OCC Proposal Form](#) (also, see below) and send it to the OCC Secretary so that it can be included in an OCC meeting agenda. If possible, please send the proposal at least a week prior to the meeting at which you would like to present it. Your attendance, or that of a representative, is required in order to present the proposal at a meeting.

Block:	Stand-Aside:	Consent:	<i>This line to be completed by OCC Secretary</i>
Proposal Name:			
Submitted by: <i>Name of individual(s) and organization, if applicable</i>			
Date:			
History: <i>What has been done in the past?</i>			
Overview: <i>Please include summary of proposal, type of proposal, goal of proposal</i>			
Details: <i>Who will be served by the proposal? How does it fit into the Lincoln Options philosophy? What are the other possible alternatives? Is there an element of urgency involved?</i>			
Budget: <i>Will funding the proposal cost anything? How much? What portion of the cost are you asking the OCC to fund? Are there other possible funding sources?</i>			
Implementation: <i>Is this a one-time project, or is it on-going? What is the timeline? Who will do the work?</i>			
Post-Implementation Evaluation/Reporting: <i>How do you plan to provide feedback to the OCC after implementation (come to an OCC meeting, email the information to an OCC meeting attendee to report for you, etc.)?</i>			

In order for a proposal to be adopted by the OCC, the OCC must reach consensus on the proposal. Once you've presented the proposal, meeting attendees will have a chance to ask questions and discuss the proposal. You may be asked to revise the proposal and present it with revisions at another meeting. It may take multiple meetings for the OCC to build consensus. Please wait for approval from the OCC before taking action even if your proposal doesn't require funding.

VI. Options Community Council

A. Council Purpose

The Options Community Council (the OCC or Council) is a reflection of the ongoing, intentional partnership between the Lincoln Options staff and families. Within this partnership, teachers have primary responsibility for overseeing the development and delivery of the Lincoln Options curriculum. The Council has primary responsibility for overseeing the budget for the non-profit branch of the Options Program and helping to ensure that there is sufficient family participation and programmatic support for the Lincoln Options Program. Through this partnership, the teachers and families strive to provide for the education of the children in keeping with the Options philosophy, goals, and curriculum as outlined in the Handbook.

Council functions include to:

1. Act as the board of directors for the non-profit branch of the Options program;
2. Represent the interests of students, families, staff, and school administration;
3. Provide family and community volunteer support for the positions and committees outlined in the Handbook;
4. Set, approve, and revise the budget and allocate funds raised by the Options non-profit organization;
5. Every three to five years and in partnership with staff, update and provide support and time for implementation of Options Design for Learning (ODL);
6. Communicate Council business to families, staff, and the public;
7. Conduct periodic staff and family surveys to evaluate the alignment of the Options program with the Options philosophy;
8. Act as a liaison to the school district and report to the community; and
9. Review and update the Options Handbook.

Teachers and Staff representatives will:

1. Regularly convey Council business to staff and report back to the Council any staff feedback and concerns;
2. Provide updates to the Council on staff proposals and decisions of school-wide significance where no involvement or additional funding by the Council is required; and
3. Introduce staff proposals of school-wide significance where Council

involvement or additional funding would be required.

B. Council Decision Making

1. The Council decisions are made at its meetings. Council meetings are open to the public.
2. The Council is elected through self-selection of volunteers as a result of both general and direct recruitment in an effort to fill as many positions as possible at all times.
3. The Council membership is outlined in the Handbook.
4. Members of the Options community may place items before the Council by:
 - a) Asking the Secretary to place the item on the Council agenda; or
 - b) Presenting the item to the Council by attending a meeting and asking at the beginning of the meeting for that item to be added to the agenda.
5. Regular meetings of the Council are publicized at the beginning of each school year. Families and staff are regularly informed of items of community interest via a school-wide newsletter.
6. In the event that decisions need to be made outside of regular meetings, the entire OCC will be contacted via email in a timely manner.
7. A quorum must be present at a Council meeting for a decision to be made. A quorum is 10 Council members, which constitutes approximately 50% of the council makeup. Exceptions include finalizing the budget and emergency decisions after the school year is over, where any six Council members constitute a quorum. In the event that decisions must be made when school is not in session, all OCC members must be informed of the meeting and/or decision details in a timely manner.
8. The Council will strive at all times to achieve consensus in its decision making. Although consensus requires unanimous consent, it does not require unanimous agreement. The most important aspect of consensus is the underlying spirit of listening to and respecting the points of view of all participants. Retreat from consensus should rarely occur but may be necessary in emergencies. Procedures for handling such situations must be adopted by the Council as it reviews its decision-making process at the beginning of each school year.
9. The Council will seek staff consensus for proposals that will impact staff and classroom curriculum. Once staff consensus is attained, the proposal will be presented to the Council for final consensus.
10. Staff will seek Council consensus for proposals of school-wide significance.
11. If a mutually agreeable next step cannot be reached between staff and the Council, three to five staff and three to five Council members will meet with a facilitator selected by the Principal and Council Chair to determine next steps. If final consensus cannot be reached, the Principal will make the final decision guided by the Options philosophy.
12. Normally, the Council may act immediately on decisions made at its meetings. However, items deemed to have significant impact to the Lincoln community are subject to review by the staff and families of currently enrolled students. If thirty days have passed and no petition to review the decision (as described below) has been received, the decision will be considered final.
13. Review of Council decisions deemed to have significant impact to the Lincoln community can be initiated by a petition signed by 10 percent of the staff and families of

currently enrolled students. Petitions must be received within thirty days after a decision is published.

14. A decision to be reviewed must be placed on the agenda of the next Council meeting. If the petitioners have not been trained in the consensus process, a special meeting can be requested to provide that training. Review of the decision will follow the process for proposal submission.

C. Council Makeup

The Council is made up of adult members of the Options community. Council terms run from June to June with consent in May to the slate of Council members for the following school year. **Class Representatives** serve from the time they volunteer in the fall through the end of the school year in June and they may continue in the role from one year to the next. The following positions comprise the Council officers: Council Chair, Council Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Council also includes a number of other positions as listed in *Section VI.E. Council Member Positions by Duty*. Council officers and all other Council positions are considered “elected” or “appointed” once the council has reached consensus regarding its membership no later than May 31st of each year according to the procedure contained in this handbook.

The priority for filling council positions each year is placed on filling any vacant positions with both general and direct recruiting emphasis placed first on positions that are immediately vacant and second on positions that will become vacant in the next year. Positions with known upcoming vacancies are encouraged to recruit a year in advance a “shadow” who will learn the position during their first year and then take on the position in the subsequent years. Positions that are filled may remain filled by the same person regardless of how long they have served but all positions are always open to be shared, with the following exceptions:

- The Teacher Representatives will serve one or two years as determined by the teachers.
- The principal holds a permanent Council position.
- The Support Staff Representative, selected by the support staff, will serve for one year.

D. General Duties of Each Council Member

1. Attend all Council meetings or make other arrangements such as reading the council minutes or arranging for an alternate representative to attend instead. Alternates may participate fully in Council decision-making if they have been trained in the consensus model.
2. Promote the effective and positive interaction, coordination, and communication necessary for whole program planning and implementation.
3. Work as a body to coordinate Council activities.
4. As a body, facilitate a process in February to recruit new Council members to open positions in May of each year.
5. Review and approve the annual budget.
6. Ensure the Treasurer presents the prior year’s tax return to the Options Community Council before the January 15 due date.
7. Attend class potlucks and meetings and other school meetings as needed.

E. Council Member Duties by Position

1. Council Chair

- a. Facilitates Council meetings.
- b. Meets as needed with the school principal and the school district administration.
- c. Coordinates the creation of the annual program calendar with the principal, teachers, and committee chairs.
- d. Expresses gratitude and recognition to members of the council for their outstanding work.
- e. Coordinates Council activities.
- f. Prepares information for and arranges OCC representation at all class meetings.
- g. Attends enrollment nights or arranges for an alternate.
- h. Organizes the all-school beginning-of-the-year family orientation.

2. Council Vice Chair

- a. Serves as Interim or acting Council Chair if the Chair is absent, must resign, or is unable to fulfill duties.
- b. Arranges childcare for Council meetings, class meetings, and other events as necessary.
- c. Serves as Family Partnership/Involvement Chair, with responsibility for family education, family and teacher surveys, new family orientation, mentor family program, and classroom team facilitation and support.
- d. Organizes the OCC sponsored back-to-school social event and arranges for OCC representation at every class potluck night.

3. Secretary

- a. Organizes the Council agenda and distributes it to Council members in advance of the bi-monthly Council meetings.
- b. Prepares Council meeting minutes.
- c. Distributes Council meeting minutes to Council members in advance of the next meeting.
- d. Distributes Council meeting minutes to Lincoln Office Administrator after consensus has been reached on those minutes.
- e. Submits a synopsis of Council minutes for circulation to the Options community.
- f. Assists with creating and/or disseminating other communications within the Council.
- g. Acts as Council archivist, maintaining Council documents deemed appropriate by the Secretary including, at minimum, all Council meeting minutes and decisions of the Council.
- h. Transfers an electronic copy of archives to standing Council Chair and incoming Secretary at the end of elected term.

- i. Provides a summary of all proposals for that school year to the Treasurer on a yearly basis, prior to budget preparation and approval by the Council.
- j. Maintains and updates the *Options Program Handbook* with approval from the Council.

4. Treasurer

- a. Retains and updates the Articles of Incorporation.
- b. Receives and disburses funds.
- c. Retains financial records.
- d. Prepares preliminary annual budget for Council review and finalizes it on Council approval.
- e. Develops and updates financial policies and procedures of the program for Council approval.
- f. Prepares a financial report on a regular (ideally monthly), but no less than quarterly basis for Council meetings and educates the Council members about the budget.
- g. Files yearly tax return and presents the tax return to the Options Community Council before the January 15 due date.
- h. Maintains budget.

5. Teacher and Staff Appreciation Chair

- a. Coordinates Staff Appreciation Week.
- b. Coordinates conference week appreciations.
- c. Coordinates regular tokens of appreciation from the community to the teachers and staff.
- d. Arranges for gifts of appreciation for teachers, staff, and other noteworthy individuals who are leaving the Lincoln community.
- e. Works collaboratively within the OSD to participate in district-wide appreciation.

6. Communications Chair

- a. Coordinates production and distribution of the *Options Opus* quarterly zine. If another individual serves as editor of the *Options Opus*, the Communications Chair and editor may cooperatively determine the degree to which the editor will attend Council meetings, if at all.
- b. Coordinates production of the weekly newsletter, “Lincoln Log,” for distribution by the front office Administrative Assistant. This is the mechanism for distributing information from the OCC to the general community.
- c. Coordinates maintenance, updates, and distribution of the *Options Program Directory* in cooperation with the Class Rep Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator.
- d. Coordinates maintenance and updates for the *LincolnOptions.org* website and social media.
- e. Coordinates public relations materials, including brochures, videos, and articles for publications.

- f. Assists with all public relations materials developed by other Council committees when needed.
- g. Coordinates the upkeep of the OCC bulletin boards.

7. Fundraising Chair

- a. Works with Treasurer to determine fundraising needs.
- b. Coordinates fundraising activities.
- c. Prepares calendar of fundraising activities.
- d. Works with Council members to identify grant opportunities and facilitate grant writing.
- e. Heads the fundraising committee and processes and approves all proposed fundraisers.

8. Volunteer Coordinator

- a. Coordinates with Communications Committee to distribute volunteer interest survey to all families.
- b. Compiles and organizes results of survey. Maintains data on community resources and on availability and special skills of volunteers.
- c. Makes information on resources and volunteers readily available to all Class Reps, event organizers, and Committee Chairs
- d. Helps Class Reps, event organizers, and Committee Chairs find the resources they need.
- e. Maintains and distributes any volunteer training materials as needed in cooperation with the principal.

9. Enrollment and Outreach Chair

- a. Distributes information about Lincoln Options program throughout the community.
- b. Serves as a contact for interested families.
- c. Organizes, advertises, and facilitates Enrollment Information Nights, attends “Countdown to Kindergarten” event, and organizes classroom Observation Week.
- d. Supervises lottery and notifies families of results.
- e. Maintains the Options program waiting list and notifies families as lottery positions become available.
- f. Creates Lincoln Options Enrollment Report.
- g. Attends Council and Enrollment Night meetings or sends an alternate.

10. External Issues Chair

- a. Attends and monitors Olympia School Board meetings and reports back to the Council each month. Recommends when a Lincoln presence is needed on a district-wide committee or in a district-wide effort.
- b. Coordinates with any other external committees or bodies that affect the Lincoln Options community or issues of elementary education in our larger OSD

community.

- c. Monitors the Legislature's consideration of education policy and funding changes and recommends ways for Lincoln families and their Council to participate in the legislative process. Participation could include receiving minutes from legislative committees, attending legislative hearings, and meeting with or writing to local legislators.
- d. Recommends ways for Lincoln families and the Council as a unified body to participate in educational decisions at the district, state, and federal levels.
- e. Interviews Olympia School Board candidates during election years to determine their support for Lincoln and alternative education. This could either be done as a candidate forum at the school, or separately, with answers to the committee's questions published in the *Options Opus* before the election.

NOTE: This chair and committee would NOT actually lobby the legislature, which would require it to be registered as an official lobbying organization. It also would not contribute funds to any political cause, which would jeopardize its status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and require that it register as a Political Action Committee

11. Class Representative Coordinator and Team

A. Coordinator

Each classroom has a team of class representatives whose purpose is to represent both the teacher and the families in that classroom by building community. The team is led by a coordinator (who may or may not also represent a specific class). The coordinator must:

- 1. Attend OCC meetings regularly.
- 2. Recruit class reps in Aug./Sept. including answering questions about the position.
- 3. Attend the OCC retreat and train class reps in their specific duties.
- 4. Send monthly emails throughout the year to all class reps ensuring that those reps who do not attend meetings have all relevant information about events, volunteering, expectations, and tools.

B. Team

The team is made up of at least two representatives. One representative will attend the OCC meetings and represent the needs of the families there. The other representative will meet regularly with the teacher and attend to the in-classroom needs.

- 1. Both reps will connect with classroom families throughout the year via email, text, or in person to help families navigate the Options program, build community, and invite families to fulfill various volunteer needs. They will also promote school-wide events to their families and act as a source of information and support.
- 2. The Teacher Support Rep will connect regularly with the class teacher to build a partnership and collaborate in creating the classroom culture and sense of inclusion that is a vital value at Lincoln. They will assess the need for family help and classroom resources.
- 3. OCC/Family Reps will coordinate three or more social activities or work parties per year to help families connect. Their goal for the year is to get to know their families

and represent them while providing opportunities for connection and inclusion outside of the school day.

4. This team is a bridge between the class, the teachers, and the OCC. At least one member of the class team (typically the Family/OCC Rep) will be present at each Council meeting to participate and be a voice on behalf of their class.

There are also one or more reps for each of the Special Education classrooms. These reps function similarly to general education reps. One or both may attend OCC meetings and represent the needs of children and families involved with Special Education including 504s and IEPs. Both reps should also coordinate resources for the teachers they represent and coordinate social gatherings as applicable and available.

12. Teacher Representatives

- a. Serve as Council representatives for instructional staff.
- b. Present teacher views and concerns and curriculum development and program issues. Report back to the teachers.
- c. Assist with creation of annual program calendar.
- d. Collaborates with Council on program planning and policy.

13. Principal

- a. Provides program information and suggestions.
- b. Serves as liaison with Olympia School District.
- c. Provides policy information.
- d. Collaborates with Council on program planning and policy.

14. Support Staff Representative

- a. Serves as Council representative for support staff.
- b. Presents support staff views and concerns and curriculum development and program issues.
- c. Reports back to the support staff.
- d. Collaborates with Council officers on program planning and policy.

15. Community Liaison

- a. Serves as community/council liaison for school.
- b. Coordinates alumni relations and giving.
- c. Acts as the Options Program historian.
- d. Acts as the liaison to the South Capitol Neighborhood Association.

16. Camp Elderberry Chair

- a. Coordinates Camp Elderberry, Lincoln's end-of-year, all-school day in nature.
- b. Assembles a planning team to manage all aspects of Camp Elderberry, including securing a location, family communication and form design, transportation, volunteer recruitment, activity and supplies coordination, site set up/clean up, and coordination with 5th grade graduation team.
- c. Meets and communicates regularly with staff to make sure Camp Elderberry runs smoothly and the individual needs and group dynamics of students and classroom

communities are attended to.

- d. In collaboration with OCC Treasurer, monitors Camp Elderberry spending and makes recommendations for adjustments to future budgets.
- e. Keeps OCC informed of progress on Camp Elderberry planning and engages Class Reps as partners when needed.
- f. Conducts an after-event evaluation with the planning team to consider feedback and make recommendations for next year.
- g. Maintains historical records from previous Camp Elderberry events.

17. Garden Chair

- a. Coordinates Garden Committee meetings.
- b. Acts as a liaison between the Council and Garden Classroom Representatives.
- c. Coordinates with teachers regarding the use of the garden during school hours.
- d. Brings proposals to the Council that concern changes or opportunities for the garden.
- e. Helps coordinate funding and grant proposals for the garden.

18. Spanish Chair

- a. Facilitates communication between the Spanish Committee and the Council.
- b. Works collaboratively with the principal and staff on issues relating to the operation of the Spanish program including issues relating to the goals, instruction, instructor(s), and evaluation of the Spanish program.
- c. Functions as the head of the Spanish Committee to organize and provide whole-school events and programming at their discretion.
- d. Provides regular updates to the Council on the Spanish program, including updates relating to funding for the program.

F. Council Election Procedures

1. Officers and Committee Chairs

- a. The council should begin the process to fill vacant positions at the first meeting in February. Using their discretion they should adhere to the following process:
 - 1. Assess upcoming vacancies by contacting all Council members to find out their interest in returning.
 - 2. Make a list of all the positions that will be vacant in the upcoming and following year.
 - 3. Collate the list of upcoming vacancies and returning members.
 - 4. Communicate this information to the Lincoln Options community to solicit interest and engagement.
 - 5. Contact the people who expressed interest.
 - 6. Fill remaining vacancies through direct recruiting via personal invitation and word of mouth.
 - 7. Once as many positions as possible have been filled, the OCC Roster should be completed and distributed to the community.
 - 8. The slate will be presented for consensus at an OCC meeting.

- b. From the first meeting in February until the slate is filled (no later than May 31) there will be brief updates to the Council at each meeting during the election process.
- c. When there is more than one interested party every effort will be made to share responsibilities and positions.
- d. Where sharing of positions and responsibilities are not an option a vote of the Options community must be held.
- e. The election process must provide for:
 - 1. Ample and timely notice of the open positions and election process and timeline to the Lincoln Options community through means including the *Options Opus* and the school-wide newsletter, including contact information for anyone interested in an open position to express that interest.
 - 2. Availability and distribution, including regular updates, of full and unabridged information about this process.

2. Classroom Positions Outside of Council (Class Reps and Garden Rep)

- a. An announcement soliciting candidates for classroom positions (or any other still-vacant positions) on the Council as well as position descriptions must be included in the August *Options Opus*. The Council will also provide information on and solicit candidates for these positions at appropriate school events such as back-to-school events, class potlucks, and first class meetings.
- b. A person who wishes to be in a classroom position outside of the Council should notify the classroom teacher and Class Rep coordinator or Garden Chair by the end of September (September 30).
- c. If there is one candidate for a position, that person will fill the position.
- d. If there is more than one candidate, candidates will share the position.
- e. The Council and classroom teacher may work collaboratively to fill positions for which there are no candidates.

3. Unexpired Terms

- a. Council Office or Committee Chair
 - 1. If a Council office or committee chair is vacated due to the resignation or incapacity of the person serving, and no other method of filling the position is provided for in this *Options Handbook*, the Council may appoint an individual to serve out the remainder of the year.
 - 2. If a committee co-chair resigns or becomes incapacitated, and the other co-chair agrees to serve as the sole chair for the remainder of the term, no additional appointment is necessary.
- b. Class Representative
 - 1. If a class representative resigns or becomes incapacitated, the families in that classroom, in conjunction with the classroom teacher and Council Chair or the designee, shall invite a new class representative to serve out the remainder of the term.
 - 2. If no class representative is selected, the Council and classroom teacher must work collaboratively to cover those responsibilities until that vacancy is filled.

VII. Family Partnership at Lincoln Options

Families at Lincoln Options have the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning and the daily activities and governance of Lincoln Options School and its Council. Family involvement is a founding principle of the Lincoln Options Program. Options is a community where families are partners in their children's education. Our program goal is for each family to contribute at least one hour of program support a week.

A. Family Access to Information

We believe in having open access to information. We encourage families to be informed about everything that is happening at our school and the way in which the Council is the steward of the program. We provide access to information primarily digitally, and families can request access to that information through the office or OCC leadership.

B. Community Gatherings

We believe that every family is part of our community. We want to foster that community and connection through social gatherings. We strive to have those gatherings at least once a month and in a variety of types of groups (including all-school activities, classroom activities, special group activities, etc.). We believe that people do their best when they have a sense of place, so we want to foster that sense of place not just for the children or during the school day, but for all people at a variety of times.

C. Welcoming and Orientation Activities

The teachers and the OCC will act together to provide back-to-school activities to orient families to expectations and opportunities at the classroom- and whole-school level.

- Fall Classroom Potluck (date set by teacher)
- Fall Classroom Meeting (date set by teacher)
- Fall All-School Meeting/Orientation
- OCC sponsored back-to-school events

D. Ways Families and Community Can Volunteer in the Classrooms

A cooperative relationship of community, teacher, child, and family is the foundation of learning for students in the Options Program. Volunteerism is an opportunity and an invitation to connect to the Lincoln Options Community. We don't need every person to do everything; we need every person to do something. The important thing is for each person to find the right fit.

Family and community volunteers directly support the efforts of teachers and student learning. Family involvement is essential in providing experiential learning and all the things that make Lincoln Options special. Opportunities for volunteering in and out of the classroom provide vital support to those efforts.

VIII. Outreach and Enrollment

A. Outreach

Options is a community where diversity is welcome and respected. The program is open to all families in the Olympia School District who wish to enroll their children in the program. Students outside Olympia may also enroll if spaces are available (see *Section VIII.C. Enrollment Criteria*, below). Students are admitted into the program on an equal opportunity basis without regard to sex, race, creed, color, national origin, or disability. Families planning to enroll a student with special needs should arrange for a meeting with the Individual Education Program (IEP) team and principal for placement and services. Program and enrollment information is distributed during the spring for the following school year.

The Olympia School District's website and Lincoln Options website publishes the Options program's timeline and enrollment information. Informational flyers are distributed to area businesses and shared through social media.

B. Enrollment Process

Historically, interest in the Options program has been greater than the number of available spaces. To ensure fairness in the process, a lottery takes place in spring to determine the order of priority for new enrolling students. Enrollment Information Night meetings are arranged for interested families to hear from the principal, teachers, and the Enrollment Committee. Prior to participating in the lottery, families should attend one of the two informational meetings presented by the Options Enrollment Committee. If families cannot attend one of the information meetings, they are strongly encouraged to work with the Enrollment Committee to coordinate a time to meet with the principal. Following attending an Enrollment Information Night, families must also complete an online Olympia School District "Elementary Choice Program Lottery" participation form by the deadline to participate in the lottery. Families may instead request and submit a paper lottery participation form from the school office. Families are encouraged to visit the classrooms during the scheduled classroom observation time. Families expressing interest after the lottery form deadline can be placed on the OSD Transfer Request waitlist by submitting a Transfer Request Form available on the Olympia school district website.

C. Enrollment Criteria

Enrollment priority in the Options Program is granted to residents of the Olympia School District. If, prior to the first day of school, a student moves out of the Olympia School District, that student's spot in the program must be given up. If a move is made during the school year, the student may complete the year in the program. However, the school office needs to be informed of the move and an interdistrict transfer agreement must be entered into by the new home school district and the Olympia School District. In the following year, if the student continues to live outside the district, C.5 applies.

Students are admitted into the Options program in the following order:

1. Lincoln service-area students.
2. Students continuing in the program from the previous year who:
 - a. Were admitted through the lottery and continue to live in the Olympia School District.
 - b. Were admitted as Lincoln service-area students, lived in the service area, and attended school at Lincoln for at least six months and subsequently moved to another residence within the Olympia School District boundaries.
 - c. Students of full-time OSD classified and certified employees at the school.
3. Siblings of students currently enrolled in the program (who will still be enrolled at Lincoln the next school year) who are entering at the kindergarten level. Children living in the same household are considered siblings if they live together more than 50% of school nights.
4. Participants in the most recent spring lottery, based on the following prerequisites:
 - a. Family attendance at an Enrollment Committee information meeting or a separate meeting with the principal.
 - b. Submission of the lottery participation form by the cutoff date.
 - c. Residency in the Olympia School District (residency must be established by August 1 of the current year).
5. Students living outside of the Olympia School District who attended Lincoln the previous year. Section C.3 applies with respect to siblings. The out-of-district spots are determined on an annual basis, i.e., if spaces become available for out-of-district students, they are only guaranteed for one year. A transfer request renewal must be submitted each year. Siblings are admitted only if out-of-district spots are available at their grade level.
6. Students on the Transfer Waitlist who reside within the Olympia School District boundaries.
7. Students living outside of the Olympia School District who meet the participation requirements of the spring lottery.
8. Students on the Transfer Waitlist that reside outside the Olympia School District

D. Leave of Absence Request

In the event of a Lincoln Options student leaving school with the intent to return, a leave-of-absence can be granted for up to a year. The family member/guardian must submit a letter to the Enrollment Committee Chair, with copies to the school office, stating the reason and the expected date of return to the program. Leave of absence requires approval by the principal and the Enrollment Committee.

The family member/guardian must notify the school of the child's return, and the child will be placed in the program as a continuing student. If the family does not return on the stated date or apply for an extension, they must re-enter the lottery.

IX. General Information

A. Where to Direct Questions and Concerns

- Class OCC and Family Representatives should be your first contact if you have concerns about school policy. Your Class Representative is also the first person to call when you don't know whom to contact.
- Class Teacher Support Representatives are the people to call for answers to questions about scheduling your time to help in or out of the classroom, the classroom newsletter, field trips, and other issues related to what happens in the classroom during the school day.
- The Options Community Council sets policies and sponsors projects that address program-wide issues. Everyone is welcome to attend Council meetings. Contact the Council Chair or Secretary a week in advance if possible if you wish to place an item on the agenda. There is also an opportunity to add to the agenda at the start of every meeting but if your issue is lengthy, it may be tabled for a future meeting. You can use this time to raise an issue to the Council. If you can't attend a Council meeting yourself, you may ask your Class Representative or a committee chair to present your issue.
- The Options Community Council Chair facilitates Council meetings. Contact the Council Chair if you have questions or concerns about the Lincoln Options program or any that cannot be answered by your Class Representatives. The Council Chair may be able to help you address your issue more effectively.
- The Olympia School District or Washington State Legislature, etc.: If you plan to address the School Board, district administration, the state legislature, etc., directly, please be sure to represent yourself as an individual, rather than as a representative of Lincoln Options.

B. Classroom Grievance Process

This process supports open communication between families and teachers for the purpose of resolving concerns related to the child, the classroom, or the teacher.

1. Families should take the concern directly to the teacher. The teacher is the most logical and helpful person to approach because she/he has the most information and shares responsibility for the child.
2. The family member or teacher may suggest a conference and include the child. The conference is an opportunity for a cooperative solution in which all members of the team (family member, teacher, and child) commit to a plan to resolve the concern.
3. If the concern cannot be resolved, the family member or teacher may arrange a conference with the principal and may choose to include supportive, skilled, or knowledgeable mediators. This extended group may include Class Representatives or a family member trained in mediation strategies at the family member's

invitation. Again, the goal is creative efforts to resolve the issue in the best interest of the child.

C. Teacher Grievance Process

1. It is the families' responsibility to take their concerns directly to the teacher.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved, either the family member or the teacher may arrange a conference with the principal.
3. If, after discussion with the principal, no resolution has been reached, either the family member or the teacher may choose to arrange a conference to include supportive skilled or knowledgeable mediators. This extended group may also include one or more of the following: Class Representative, Council Chair, or other council officers.

D. OCC Grievance Process

1. It is the families'/Council member's responsibility to take their concerns directly to the Council member with whom they have a grievance.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved, either party may arrange a conference with the principal.
3. If, after discussion with the principal, no resolution has been reached, either party may choose to arrange a conference to include supportive skilled or knowledgeable mediators. This extended group will most likely also include one or more Council officers to aid in conflict resolution.