



# Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association

---

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2, 2025

## CONTACTS

Theresa Marty  
Principal at the time of application

Sofia Bossard  
Current principal  
Lincoln Center Elementary  
South St. Paul  
[sbossard@sspps.org](mailto:sbossard@sspps.org)  
651-457-9426

Simone LaBonté  
Communications and Awards Manager  
Minnesota Elementary School Principals'  
Association  
[simone@mespa.net](mailto:simone@mespa.net)  
952-297-8670

---

## Lincoln Center Elementary Named a 2025–26 Minnesota School of Excellence

*School recognized for its rigorous academics, inclusive culture, and commitment to continuous improvement*

(Roseville, MN, September 2, 2025)— Lincoln Center Elementary has been named a 2025-26 Minnesota School of Excellence, an honor awarded by the Minnesota Elementary School Principals' Association (MESPA). This status is given to a select group of Minnesota schools that sustained a one-to two-year commitment of research and self-reflection to improve their schools. Their peer-reviewed application is centered around six standards of effective schools. Lincoln Center's unwavering commitment to continuous improvement, blending rigorous academics with inclusivity, results in a collaborative culture where students feel like they belong.

The announcement comes at a time when families and communities are increasingly focused on preparing students not only for academic success but also for life in a diverse

and changing world. The Minnesota School of Excellence designation affirms that Lincoln Center is doing both exceptionally well.

“Becoming a Minnesota School of Excellence was important because it validated the intentional, rigorous work our staff engages in every day to ensure all students thrive,” commented Theresa Marty, principal of Lincoln Center at the time of the application. “As a principal, I pursued this process to honor and recognize the inclusive practices, collaboration, and commitment to continuous improvement that define our school community. This designation not only celebrates the excellence already happening within our building, but also affirms our shared belief that every child deserves high-quality learning experiences supported by dedicated, innovative educators.”

Theresa Marty was the principal at the time of the application. Sofia Bossard is the current principal of Lincoln Center Elementary.

“One of the defining features of Lincoln Center is our focus on continuous improvement,” the school shared in its application. “We set high academic expectations across all grade levels and implement a curriculum that is rigorous, standards-based, and aligned with current research around best practices.”

## **A Culture of High Expectations**

“One of the defining features of Lincoln Center is our focus on continuous improvement,” the school shared in its application. “Lincoln Center holds high academic expectations across all grade levels and implements a curriculum that is rigorous, standards-based, and aligned with current research around best practices.”

Students benefit from access to Tier 1 instruction with a strong emphasis on foundational literacy. Lincoln Center has implemented specific programs to build critical thinking, communication, and inquiry skills that lead to deeper learning.

## **Collaboration and Growth at the Core**

Lincoln Center’s success is also rooted in professional collaboration. Teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), engage in data-driven meetings with intervention teams, and participate in regular coaching cycles. “Teachers work with their colleagues and our Equity and Instructional coach to reflect on their teaching practices, analyze student learning data, and collaboratively plan instruction,” the school explained.

Administrators provide ongoing professional development that is carefully aligned to schoolwide goals for improvement and growth.

### **Building an Inclusive and Supportive Environment**

Beyond academics, Lincoln Center has made inclusivity a cornerstone of its culture. Staff regularly engage in professional development like Innocent Classroom and Conscious Discipline training to examine personal biases and strengthen their ability to meet students' diverse needs. The curriculum incorporates multiple cultural perspectives, and schoolwide events—from assemblies to cross-grade celebrations—reinforce belonging and community.

Administrators also ensure responsive leadership by maintaining open lines of communication with staff. Through both formal and informal feedback loops, educators receive targeted support and opportunities for growth.

### **Believing in Every Student**

"Lincoln Center is a school that truly believes in the potential of every student," the school shared. "We set high academic expectations while also valuing the social-emotional health, physical well-being, and cultural identity of our students and staff. Our school's inclusive practices, collaborative culture, and commitment to continuous improvement create a vibrant learning environment where all students can grow, learn, and feel that they belong."

MESPA Executive Director Michelle Krell praised Lincoln Center's achievement, saying, "This recognition is a reflection of the dedication, hard work, and belief that every child can succeed. Lincoln Center has built a model of collaboration and continuous growth that benefits students, staff, and the entire community."

### **About the MN School of Excellence Program**

The Minnesota School of Excellence program is grounded in research, based on six standards of effective schools and is peer reviewed. It's a one- to two- year-long journey of reflection, learning, and goal-setting. The Minnesota School of Excellence program emphasizes that excellence is not an end goal—it's a process. It's built day by day, decision by decision, through reflection, responsiveness, and a shared belief that growth is always possible.

Congratulations to Lincoln Center Elementary for this extraordinary achievement.