

Social Emotional Learning Program Evaluation

Lincoln Public Schools
Administrative Council Retreat
Lisa Langone



The program evaluation was conducted in four phases:

1. Initial review of records
2. On-site observations
3. Faculty, staff and administration focus groups
4. Data analysis and culminating report

Assessment Methods

A variety of assessment methods were utilized to evaluate

Primary Tool: Massachusetts Model 3.0 Framework for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs: Program Audit Tool (2020)

Massachusetts School Counselors Association (MASCA) in collaboration with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) framework

an assessment to determine the degree to which a school counseling program is aligned with key evidence-based practices

establishes a baseline for program growth and accountability

DESE MTSS Self-Assessment tool

Portions of this tool were utilized



TIMELINE

Late June 2025	Report received (after school ended)
July 2025	Present to Administrative Council
August 2025	Building Based Administrators Check Ins Introduction to Faculty
September 2025	Present to the School Based Mental Health Providers and Faculty In Therapeutic Programs
October 2025	Present to School Committee and Consider Budget Initiatives
December through April	Unpack Ideas on Wednesdays, Explore Places where Small Shifts are Ready to Happen
May and June 2026	Reflect on Year with Admin Council and MH Team and Begin a Plan for Next Steps

QUESTIONS....

- 1) What services are currently provided by the school-based mental health team, and how effectively do these services address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of students?
 - 2) What interventions, supports, and services are necessary to comprehensively meet the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of all students in the district, and what systems or structures need to be established or improved to ensure equitable access to these supports?
 - 3) What is the current capacity of the school-based mental health team, and how can the existing structure be leveraged or adapted to develop a culturally responsive, multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for social, emotional and behavioral needs?
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AREAS OF STRENGTH



District Commitment to Inclusive Practices and SEL

- The District Improvement Plan and revised master schedule reflect a strong commitment to inclusive practices and SEL, including daily Connections blocks that prioritize relationship-building
- Professional development for staff has supported SEL-aligned practices

Responsive Classroom

Wayfinder curriculum

Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS) training

- Consultation with McLean Hospital and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) for the school based mental health team further demonstrate a systemic investment in students' social emotional development

Robust Special Education Support Staff

- Lincoln Public Schools maintains a higher-than-average ratio of special education support staff, inclusive of School Adjustment Counselors and School Psychologists, compared to both state and comparable district rates

2.4 special education “support staff” per 100 students with disabilities

More than 2x’s the state rate

- This infrastructure enables a strong foundation to meet the growing mental health and behavioral needs of students with disabilities

Strong Foundation to Implement SEL

- Responsive Classroom practices and grade-level SEL activities support positive school climates
- Physical spaces within each school including grade-level “hubs” are utilized for community building and peer collaboration
- A district-wide “Connections” block provides a consistent structure for SEL integration into the school day

Mental Health Team Expertise and Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- The district's mental health professionals work collaboratively with teachers, nurses, and related service providers to deliver integrated social, emotional, and behavioral supports
- Staff operate with a "whole child" mindset, actively participating in team-based intervention processes across both campuses
- Tier 2 affinity groups, such as Newcomers, LGBTQ+, and Deployment groups, created to promote equity and student connection

Creation of Specialized Therapeutic Programs

- The Foundations and Bridge programs were recently developed in response to rising emotional and behavioral challenges, offering in-district alternatives to more restrictive and costly out-of-district placements
- These programs are staffed with low student-to-staff ratios and demonstrate some emerging positive instructional practices

Out of District Numbers:

Lincoln 12.2 % versus State 5.8%

Family Partnerships

- Staff consistently emphasize proactive family communication, particularly around transitions and elevated student needs, to foster trust and alignment
- Counselors serve as liaisons between school and home, ensuring continuity in supports and responsiveness to families' concerns

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

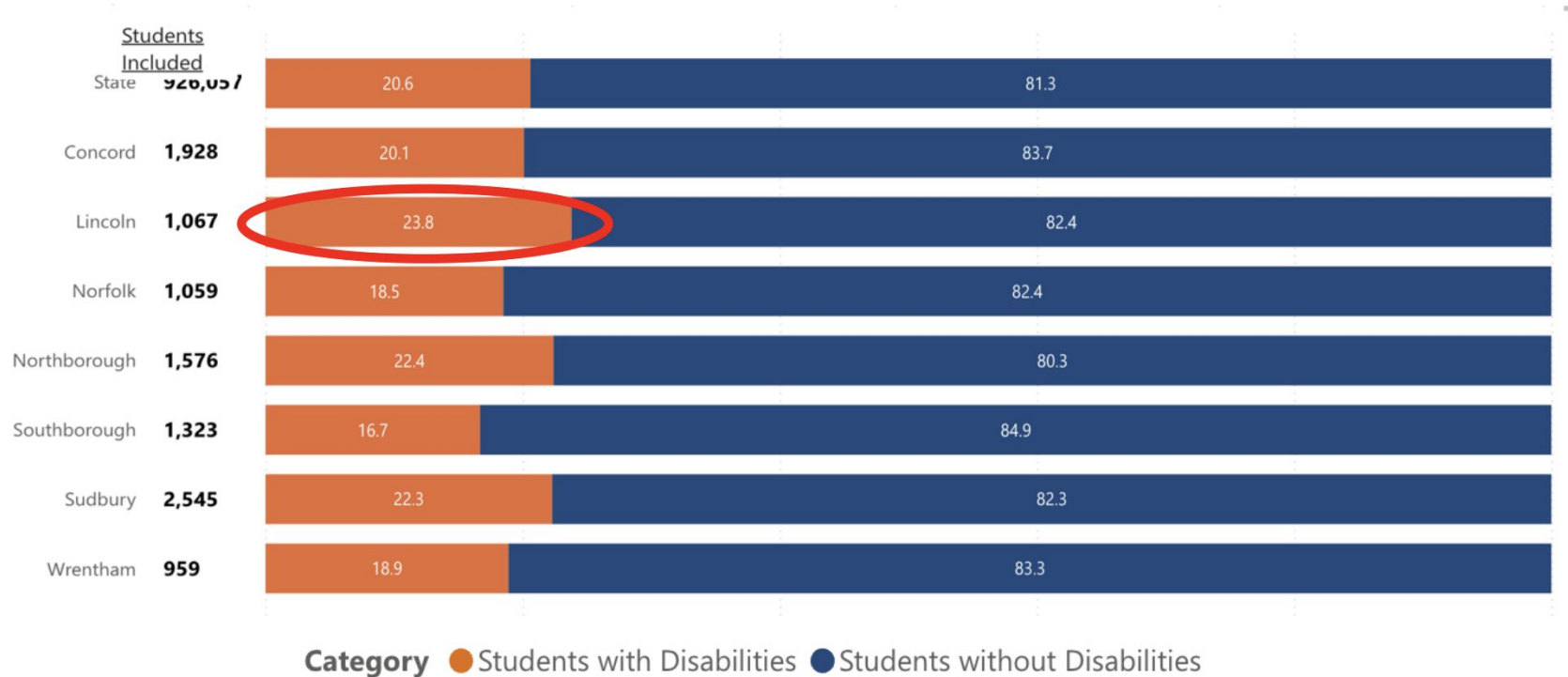


Strengthening Tiered SEL Supports

- The district lacks a universal, evidence-based Tier 1 SEL curriculum, resulting in inconsistent classroom implementation and variability in the use of the Connections block
- SEL screeners are not consistently used across K-8, limiting early identification of students needing Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports

“A critical gap remains in the consistent implementation of Tier 1 SEL instruction. The district does not currently utilize a comprehensive, evidence-based SEL curriculum across all grade levels.”

Addressing Overidentification in Special Education



Addressing Overidentification for Special Education

- The district's special education identification rate exceeds both state and comparable district rates, suggesting a need for stronger general education interventions
- Inconsistent access to tiered supports may contribute to students being over-referred for special education services

Student Support Team Process Alignment

- Across schools, SST processes are fragmented and inconsistent, in some cases with separate processes to address student academic and social-emotional needs, contrary to best practices
- Staff reported challenges with some students being “bounced” between different referral processes, delaying access to interventions

General Education Support Staff Roles

- The district has invested heavily in special education staff but has fewer allocated general education roles, such as “School Counselors”, than both state and comparable district rates
- This structure limits Tier 1 SEL delivery and targeted Tier 2 interventions for general education students
- Current staff are overextended, and some prevention-based services have been deprioritized due to mandated IEP-service delivery demands

Mental Health Team Roles and Workload Clarity

- Staff caseloads are high and inconsistently documented, especially for Tier 2 and 3 services provided to general education students
- Role confusion and competing non-clinical responsibilities contribute to burnout and reduced service delivery capacity

School Discipline and Restorative Practices

- The Safety Care Team is overutilized for minor behavioral incidents, often impacting these staff members' ability to provide scheduled services
- Reentry protocols for students returning to the classroom after a significant behavioral incident lack a restorative focus, missing opportunities for relationship repair

Specialized Therapeutic Program Structures and Instructional Practices

- Inconsistencies exist between the two Foundations programs in theoretical framework, staffing models, and instructional quality
- Staff reported a lack of clarity regarding the program's "therapeutic" practices, leading to inconsistent application and heavy reliance on reactive strategies
- Targeted PD, clearer academic expectations for tutors, and improved programmatic structures would improve program fidelity and outcomes across both campuses

RECOMMENDATIONS

Philosophical Orientation to Therapeutic Programs

Program Staffing

SEL Curriculum

Academic Curricula and Instruction

Program Eligibility



ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

BRYT Model

Professional Development

Specific Changes to Roles to Expand Upon Tiered Access to Counseling and SEL



WHAT ARE THE TAKEAWAYS????

Roles and responsibilities organization chart to identify these roles and see where strengths are but also identify the gaps

Examine caseloads and look at allocation as a whole organization

Adding in Robust Tiered Intervention and examine eligibility and special education services

Consideration of FTE related needs - School Counselors

Ensure PreSchool has access to SEL and School Based MH steps and alignment

Determine next steps, take time

Think about budget implications

