

# *The Options Program Handbook*

*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.

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 parents interested in alternative education and more active parent 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 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, which now includes twelve classrooms with a total enrollment of about 300 students, encourages active parent participation and offers an educational choice for families in the Olympia School District.

## **B. The Lincoln School Building**

Designed by architect Joseph Wohieb, 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

### 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 that 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)*

### Overview

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 parents and teachers to develop their individual goals and programs.
2. See parents 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 parent-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 & Structure**

### **A. The Options Community**

The Options community consists of:

1. Children & their families enrolled in the Options program,
2. Community members involved with the Options Program and
3. Employees of the Olympia School District assigned to Lincoln School.
4. Staff and students of the Ruben Dario School in Santo Tomas, Nicaragua. (*Adopted 5/25/2004*)

### **B. Class Arrangement and Placement of Students**

The Options program 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 6 – 7 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 “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 is done by a committee of staff, parents and the principal, who interview candidates and make hiring recommendations to 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 Activities 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. Teachers add ten minutes to their instruction time each day to accumulate, or “bank,” time for this planning. The Options Program schedules Early Release days beyond the number assigned by the district. An Early Release is scheduled approximately every other Friday depending on Holidays and District Calendar (Approximately 14 or 15 per year).

The teachers meet and plan approximately every other Friday throughout the school year. On these afternoons, parents organize Early Release after-school activities. These activities may include art projects, crafts, and large motor activities such as field games. The activities offer enrichment opportunities and childcare for all Options families.

Early Release activities are provided at minimal cost. The Options Program provides scholarships on a no-questions-asked basis through the program budget.

The Early Release procedure is:

Students are released at 12:55 on early release days. School buses leave Lincoln on these days at 1:00. Activities begin at 1:00 and end at 3:22. All students who participate in the after-school activities are to be picked up at 3:22. (Students attending the after-school YMCA program must report to the gym at 3:22.) After 3:40 there is no supervision on the playground, so it is important to pick your child up *promptly* after the activities program lets out. There is no 3:30 bus service because school is dismissed at 12:55.

## **E. Student Progress Reports**

Similar to other schools in the Olympia School District, Lincoln uses the following schedule for student progress reports. Of course, student progress and self-evaluation are discussed throughout the school year.

<b>Beginning of Oct</b>	<b>Parent-Child-Teacher goal-setting conferences</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Written report to parents</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Mid-year Parent-Child-Teacher goal review</b>
<b>Beginning of June</b>	<b>Written report only</b>

## **F. Field Trips**

Options students often take field trips. These trips use both parent 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 parents. They will also send out field trip permission slips. Parents 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. Each driver must also complete a “volunteer driver statement” and have that statement on file in the school office

## G. Annual Program Calendar

The Annual Program Calendar 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 *Options Opus*, in school district papers, and at school events.

An Annual Program Calendar committee meets during the second or third week in June to identify events scheduled through the following school year. This committee consists of the school Principal, a teacher representative, the Council President, the Early Release Coordinator, the chairpersons for the Enrollment & Orientation, Social & Appreciation, Communications, and Fundraising committees. All interested people are invited to attend.

## H. Budget and Fundraising

Parents carry out fundraising activities to support the Options Program at Lincoln School and contribute to the school community. The primary fundraising event for the Options Program is the Fund Drive. Other fundraising events are held depending on funding needs and available volunteers to organize the event. Fundraising activities may include:

- **Fund Drive**

Each year, the Fundraising Committee asks families to pledge to the Fund Drive. The Fund Drive was established in 1990 as a way to reduce the amount of parent time spent on fundraising activities. By using this pledge and payment system, we free up parent volunteer time for work in the classroom.

*Our voluntary contributions are tax deductible.* The Fundraising Chair distributes and collects pledge forms. The Chair also monitors the funds received.

- **The Annual Auction**

The Options Auction has been successful as a fund-raiser and a fun time.

- **Grocery Receipts**

Some local grocery stores donate 1% of the totals from their grocery receipts to school groups such as the Options Program at Lincoln School. The Fundraising Chair coordinates collection and redemption of the receipts.

- **Other Fundraising Activities**

Options Community Council sponsors other special fundraising projects. These projects include sales of T-shirts. Anyone may propose a school fundraiser, but the Options Council must approve the program's participation in such events.

## **Funds from fundraising activities go to these budget items:**

<u>Budget Item</u>	<u>Typical Expense</u>
Classroom expenses	extra project materials, books, supplies, special events, and field trips
School wide resources	all-school activities, special projects, and software
School garden	seeds, tools, and materials
Playground	equipment, special projects, balls, etc.
Social and appreciation	snacks, music, decorations, appreciation gifts
Parent Meetings	supplies, speaker fees, snacks
Teacher training	tuition, travel
Communications	printing, professional services
Enrollment	orientation meeting supplies, printing
Camp out	site rental, food, etc.
Scholarship	all-district summer school fees
Treasurer	accountant services, incorporation fees
Community Council	printing, stamps, supplies, etc.

### **I. Special Allocation Procedures** (*adopted May, 2003*)

In the event that additional funds accrue in the Options Community Council accounts, the following procedures govern how members of the Options community access and use those funds. Additional funds shall be defined to be the amount of monies that exceed the total of:

The amount set aside to fund current fiscal operations, and the amount set aside for a cash flow reserve, as determined by the Council.

If these funds accrue to an excess of 5 percent of the entire program's operational funds (as defined by Part 1, Line 9 "Total Revenue" of the most recently filed IRS Form 990, Return of Organizations Exempt from Income Tax), it shall be the responsibility of the Options Community Council to strongly encourage, by communication to all committees and the entire Options community, the spending of these additional funds. It shall also be the responsibility of the Options Community Council to track and report on an annual basis the spending of additional fund monies so as to evaluate the overall use and management of such monies.

#### **To request the use of additional funds:**

**Step 1.** Prepare a written grant proposal that includes the following:

- A description of the project, how it relates to the program as described in the Handbook, how it will benefit the Options community, how the project will be implemented and maintained and by whom. Include timeline requirements.
- A detailed budget that includes the amount requested; a timeline for money allocation the expected cost of items to be purchased, other income requirements (for example, maintenance costs) matching grant requirements, other funding sources.

**Step 2.** Contact Council President and request to be added to the agenda of the next Council business meeting

**Step 3.** Contact the Council Secretary to arrange distribution of copies of written grant proposal to Council members one week prior to Council meeting.

**Step 4.** Send a representative to the agreed upon Council meeting to present proposal and answer questions.

**Step 5.** Attend additional meetings as required until the Council is able to reach a decision.

## J. Guidance for Writing a Proposal (May 27, 2014)

Any member of the Lincoln Community may bring a proposal to the Council. A proposal to the Council can be a request to change a policy or guideline, or a request to use Council funds for a specific project. In order for any proposal to be adopted by the Council, the Council must reach consensus on the proposal. For further details on the Council's decision-making process, see section VI. B. of this handbook. This section offers guidance for writing a proposal to the Council. Before preparing a proposal the school principal or an Options Community Council member should be consulted. The principal or council member will provide guidance as needed.

### Your proposal should include the following:

#### 1. Overview.

- Summarize the proposal in one or two sentences.
- State the type of proposal.
- State the desired goal of the proposal.
- Describe how the implementation of the proposal will align with or further the Lincoln Options philosophy.

#### 2. Details. Organize your ideas. Think about all of the variables that could arise that could affect the implementation or success of your proposal, and the proposal's potential impacts. Try to address all aspects of these issues.

*If your proposal addresses a perceived problem or deficiency, try to be open to solutions that you may not have thought of yourself. It is helpful to remain as unattached as possible to your particular solution. Sometimes your original idea or solution will evolve into something that looks very different from how it started. Being open to different solutions will help the Council in addressing the problem that you see and on achieving consensus on your proposal.*

In this section, you should address the following:

- Who is currently impacted by the problem you see?
- What will that potential impact of your proposed solution be?
- Is there any element of urgency involved? If so, describe.
- Do others see a problem that needs to be resolved?
- Is this an ongoing project or a one-time action?

#### 3. Options and costs. Describe possible alternatives to your proposal, including those that may cover areas of potential concern for the Council. Briefly describe the pros and cons of each option. Include the associated costs and financial impact of each option if applicable.

Presenting a number of options gives the Council a variety of pathways toward reaching consensus, especially if the original proposal is met with resistance.

#### 4. Recommendation. Re-state your proposal, and describe why it is the best alternative or option.

*Remember that your recommendation needs to be consented upon. It can be helpful to try to*

*anticipate issues that people may have and make modifications and compromises up front . You will save time and energy if you modify your recommended option and proposal to address what you know the group will probably ask you to change anyway. The goal of consensus is not to get your way, but to get everyone to agree to the alternative or solution that is best for the group and the organization.*

5. **Implementation and funding.** Describe how the proposal will be carried out and the details of how it will be funded. Please include the following:
  - **Timeline.** What is the schedule for completion or implementation?
  - **Staffing.** Who will do the work? Who will be the point person with whom the Council can communicate?
  - **Period of Review.** Should the proposal be reviewed? What should the schedule for review be?
  - **Funding.** If there is to be funding involved, identify whether it will come from the Options budget or external sources. If it is to be funded from the Options budget, from where within the budget will it come? Is this a one time or recurring budget item? If the funding is from external sources, please include a plan for securing the funding.
6. **Presentation of the proposal to the Council.** When you have your proposal as ready as you believe possible, please follow these steps:
- 7.
8. Review your proposal with someone else. *It is often the case that a clean eye will see things you may have missed.*
9. Email your proposal to the Council President.
10. Set up a date and time with the Council President to present your proposal at a Council meeting. *It is essential that the sponsor of the proposal be at the meeting to present it to the Council.*
11. Prepare for your presentation.
12. Present the proposal at a Council meeting. *Be organized, open-minded and do not take Council feedback personally. The Council President will be able to help guide you through the presentation process.*

*We all come to this from different walks of life and often see things very differently. Be patient and open to other ideas and differing opinions. The bottom line will always be what is best for the kids.*

*Do not expect an immediate decision, as it often takes multiple meetings for the council to build consensus around a proposal. Proposals generally will be discussed and dissected at the first meeting. Then, a series of edits or revisions will be recommended to be made to the proposal, which will then be brought back to another meeting to test for consensus. This process will continue until consensus is achieved or the proposal is dropped. It is the goal of the Council to objectively hear all proposals and build toward consensus in good faith.*

## **VI. Options Community Council** *(name changed 01/10/2006)*

### **A. Council Purpose** *(amended 10/11/2012)*

The Options Community Council (the Council) is a reflection of the ongoing, intentional partnership between the Lincoln Options staff and parents. 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 non-profit Options Program budget and helping to ensure that there is sufficient parent participation and programmatic support for the Lincoln Options Program. Through this partnership, the teachers and parents strive to provide for the education of the children in keeping with the Options philosophy, overview, 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, parents, staff, and school administration;
3. Provide parent and community volunteer support for the positions and committees outlined in the Handbook;
4. Set, approve, and revise 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 parent 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 parent body and staff;
9. Approve parent participation on hiring committees; and
10. Review and update the Options Handbook.

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. Options Community Council Decision-Making** *(amended 10/11/2012)*

1. Options Community Council (the Council) decisions are made at its meetings. Council meetings are open to the public.
2. The Council is elected as outlined in the Handbook.
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 Council President to place the item on the Council agenda; or
  - b. Presenting the item to the Council during the public comment portion of the Council agenda.



5. Regular meetings of the Council are publicized at the beginning of each school year. Parents and staff are regularly informed of items of community interest via Council "talking points" that are included in classroom newsletters. Council meeting agendas and minutes are posted in the school office. Items of significant impact to the community will be more prominently publicized.
6. Emergency meetings of the Council will be publicized to parents as widely and as far in advance as is reasonable. Parents and staff will be informed of decisions made at emergency Council meetings via Council "talking points" that are included in classroom newsletters. If school is not in session, emergency meetings and resulting decisions will be communicated by alternate, timely means.
7. A quorum must be present at a Council meeting for a decision to be made. A quorum is normally 51 percent of the current Council membership. Exceptions include finalizing the budget and emergency decisions after the school year is over, where any 6 Council members constitute a quorum.
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 where Council involvement or additional funding is required.
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 President 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 parents or guardians 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 parents or guardians 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 a meeting is not scheduled within thirty days of the petition's receipt, petitioners may call for a special meeting. In either case, the intention to review a decision must be publicized in the same manner as a decision to be made at a meeting of the Council. A decision may be reversed at such a Council meeting by a simple majority of the adult members of the Options community.

## C. Council Makeup

The Council is made up of adult members of the Options community. Council terms run from June to June with elections in May. **Class Representatives** serve from the time they are elected in September through the August Parent Council Meeting.

Council members serve for staggered terms of two years, with the following exceptions:

- Class Representatives, elected by the members of their class, serve for one year.
- 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.

### **Options Program Officers**

President

Vice President

Treasurer

Secretary

### **Election Schedule**

(Even Years)

(Odd Years)

(Even Years)

(Odd Years)

### **Committee Chairs**

Social & Appreciation Committee Chair

Communications Committee Chair

Fund Raising Committee Chair

Resource Committee Chair

Enrollment & Outreach Committee Chair

External Issues Committee Chair

Early Release Chair

Lincoln Campout Chair

Garden Chair

Spanish Committee Chair

(Odd Years)

(Even Years)

(Odd Years)

(Even Years)

(Odd Years)

(Even Years) (*adopted 3/27/2001*)

(Odd Years) (*adopted 6/22/2004*)

(Odd Years) (*adopted 1/24/2012*)

(Even Years) (*adopted 3/13/2012*)

(Even Years) (*adopted 5/28/2013*)

### **Class Representatives**

Class Representative (one per class)

(Every Year)

### **School District Representatives**

Teacher Representatives (2)

(Specialists are included in this group)

Principal

Support Staff Representative

### **Selection Schedule**

(One Even Year, One Odd Year)

(Permanent)

(Every Year)

### **Community Representative**

Community Member

(Two-Year Term, beginning  
in any year)

## **D. Generic Duties of Each Council Member**

1. Attend all Council meetings, or arrange for an alternate representative to attend instead. Alternates may participate fully in Council decision making.
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, appoint a nominating committee in February and elect new Council members to open positions in May of each year.
5. Review and approve the annual budget.
6. Draft program policies and procedures.
7. Ensure the Treasurer presents the prior year's tax return to the Options Community Council before the January 15 due date (see E.4.g. below).

## **E. Council Member Duties by Position**

### **1. PRESIDENT**

- a. Organizes the Council agenda and distributes it to Council members in advance of the monthly Council meetings.
- b. Facilitates Council meetings.
- c. Serves as Council liaison to the Olympia School District and Options Program. Meets as needed with the school principal and the school district administration.
- d. Attends all School Board meetings, or appoints a delegate.
- e. Coordinates the creation of the Annual Program Calendar with the principal, teachers, and committee chairs.
- f. Coordinates the Parent Information Center.
- g. Coordinates Council activities.
- h. Attends Parent Night meetings.
- i. Coordinates program media contacts and public presentations in cooperation with the Communications Chair.
- j. Orients Classroom Representatives.

### **2. VICE PRESIDENT**

- a. Serves as Interim or Acting President if the President is absent, must resign, or is unable to fulfill duties.
- b. Sets the agenda for and facilitates Parent Meetings.
- c. Arranges childcare for parent meetings. Retains the list of Childcare Providers and Childcare Guideline and distributes to interested Options community members who arrange child care for class meetings, committee meetings, Community Council meetings, etc.
- d. Serves as Parent Partnership Chair, with responsibility for parent education, parent and teacher surveys, new family orientation, mentor family program, and classroom team facilitation and support.
- e. Organizes fall Parent Orientation Night with Enrollment and Social and Appreciation.

### **3. SECRETARY**

- a. Prepares Council meeting minutes.
- b. Distributes Council meeting minutes to Council members in advance of next meeting.
- c. Submits a synopsis of Council minutes for circulation to Options families and the Options community.
- d. Acts as Council archivist, maintaining Council documents deemed appropriate by the Secretary including, at minimum, all Council meeting minutes, decisions of the Council as described in section VI.B of the Handbook, and grant proposals submitted under the specialized allocation procedure described in section V.I. of the Handbook.
- e. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.
- f. Transfers an electronic copy of archives to standing Council President and incoming Secretary at the end of elected term.

### **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 for Council meetings.
- g. Files yearly tax return and presents the tax return to the Options Community Council before the January 15 due date.
- h. Maintains budget.
- i. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

### **5. SOCIAL & APPRECIATION CHAIR**

- a. Facilitates school-wide social interaction (dances, teacher luncheon, music, potlucks, fall Parent Orientation Night) among Options families to enhance and encourage a sense of community among program participants.
- b. Conveys the appreciation of the community to deserving individuals.
- c. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

### **6. COMMUNICATIONS CHAIR** (*updated May 2014*)

- a. Coordinates production and distribution of the *Options Opus* monthly newsletter. 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 maintenance, updates and distribution of the *Options Program Directory*.
- c. Maintains and updates the *Options Program Handbook*, with approval of the council.
- d. Coordinates maintenance and updates for the *LincolnOptions.org* website.
- e. Coordinates public relations materials, including brochures, videos, and articles for publications.
- f. Reviews and coordinates all public relations materials developed by other Council committees.

- g. Coordinates program media contacts and public presentations in cooperation with the President.
- h. Participates in grant development and presentations.
- i. Maintains alumni list and relations.
- j. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

## **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.
- e. Works with Communications Committee to facilitate grant writing.
- f. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

## **8. RESOURCES CHAIR**

- a. Organizes annual Resource Survey. Updates survey form as needed. Coordinates with Enrollment Committee to distribute survey form at September parent orientation meeting.
- b. Compiles and organizes results of Resource 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 Classroom Resource Coordinators.
- d. Helps Classroom Resource Coordinators find the resources their classes need.
- e. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.
- f. Arranges childcare for Community Council meetings.

## **9. ENROLLMENT AND OUTREACH CHAIR**

- a. Distributes information about Lincoln Options Program throughout the community.
- b. Serves as a contact for interested parents.
- c. Organizes, advertises, and facilitates Lottery Information Nights, and organizes classroom observation week(s).
- d. Supervises lotteries, and notifies parents of results.
- e. Maintains the Options program waiting list and notifies parents as lottery positions become available.
- b. Organizes and facilitates September parent orientation meeting with Parent Partnership and Social and Appreciation.
- f. Reviews enrollment policies and initiates changes if deemed needed.
- g. Manages Extended Kindergarten payment system.
- h. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or sends an alternate.

## **10. EXTERNAL ISSUES CHAIR: (adopted 3/27/2001)**

- a. Attend and monitor Olympia School Board meetings, and report back to the Community Council each month on board happenings and decisions. Recommend when a Lincoln presence is needed on a district wide committee or in a district wide effort.
- b. Monitor the Legislature's consideration of education policy and funding changes, and recommends ways for Lincoln parents and their Community 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.
- c. Recommend ways for Lincoln parents and the Community Council as a unified body to participate in educational decisions at the district, state and federal levels.
  - d. Interview 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 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 501c3 nonprofit organization and require that it register as a Political Action Committee

**11. CLASS REPRESENTATIVE (one for each class):**

- a. Meets once a month with Classroom Volunteer Coordinator, Classroom Resource Coordinator, and Teacher to assess classroom needs, views, and concerns and to communicate council issues. (This group is known as the Classroom Team.)
- b. Develops, coordinates, and activates parent telephone tree to collect and disseminate Program information whenever necessary.
- c. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

**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. Attend Council and Parent Night meetings or select alternates.

**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.
- e. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

**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. Reports back to the support staff
- c. Collaborates with Council officers on program planning and policy.
- d. Attends Council and Parent Night meetings or selects an alternate.

**15. COMMUNITY MEMBER**

- a. Serves as community/council liaison for school.
- b. Attends Council meetings.

**16. EARLY RELEASE CHAIR** (*adopted 6/22/2004*)

- a. Works with Council to develop a schedule for Early Release and publicizes this schedule no later than August 15<sup>th</sup> for the coming school year.
- b. Identifies those, both professionals and volunteers, who will provide activities for the children participating in each day of Early Release and makes appropriate arrangements for the delivery of these services.
- c. Publicizes the availability and cost of activities for each day of Early Release and organizes the schedule in cooperation with Lincoln office staff.
- d. Monitors the services provided by volunteers and professionals for both level of participation and quality.
- e. Attends council meetings.
- f. Monitors financial status of the program in coordination with the treasurer.

**17. LINCOLN CAMPOUT CHAIR** (*adopted 1/24/2012*)

- a. Coordinates the annual Lincoln campout.
- b. Maintains job descriptions for the Lincoln campout and recruits volunteers to fill the positions.
- c. Prepares calendar of activities in preparation for the Lincoln campout and works with volunteers to achieve the timely completion of the activities.
- d. Coordinates school-wide communications regarding the Lincoln campout.
- e. Monitors the financial status of the Lincoln campout in coordination with the Treasurer.
- f. Attends Council meetings or selects an alternate.

**18. GARDEN CHAIR** (*adopted 3/13/2012*)

- a. Attends Council and Garden Committee meetings.
- b. Acts as a liaison between the Council and Garden Coordinators and Garden Classroom Representatives.
- c. Brings proposals to the Council that concern changes or opportunities for the garden.
- d. Helps coordinate funding and grant proposals for the garden.

**19. SPANISH CHAIR** (*adopted 5/28/2013*)

- a. Attends Council meetings.
- b. Facilitates communication between the Spanish Committee and the Council.
- c. 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.
- d. Provides regular updates to the Council on the Spanish program, including updates relating to funding for the program.

**F. Possible Classroom Positions Outside of Council**

**1. CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR – Jobs may include...**

- a. Serves as teacher/parent liaison for in-class activities.
- b. Assists teacher with Friday newsletter addressing classroom help, snack, field trips, resources, and other miscellaneous information.
- c. Activates classroom phone tree to collect and disseminate information whenever necessary.
- d. Meets once a month with Classroom Representative, Resource Coordinator, and Teacher (the Classroom Team), to assess classroom needs, parent help, and concerns.
- e. Coordinates with Parent Participation Committee.

- f. Conducts yearly “snapshot” evaluation of parent participation.
- g. Maintains monthly parent help calendar.
- h. Communicates teacher requests for out-of-class help.
- i. Attends Parent Night meetings.
- j. Attends Classroom Team training.

## **2. CLASSROOM RESOURCE COORDINATOR**

- a. Collects and/or coordinates resources for the teacher (e.g., materials, slides, speakers).
- b. Assists teacher with Friday newsletter addressing field trips, resources, and other program information.
- c. Activates parent telephone tree to collect and disseminate information whenever necessary.
- d. Meets once a month with Classroom Team (Classroom Representative, Classroom Volunteer Coordinator, and Teacher) to assess classroom needs, parent help, and concerns.
- e. Assists teacher in facilitating class meetings. Attends Resource Committee meetings.
- f. Attends Classroom Team training.

## **3. GARDEN CLASSROOM REPRESENTATIVES** (one or two positions for each classroom) (*adopted 3/13/2012*)

- a. Attends monthly Garden Representative meetings.
- b. Coordinates with teachers regarding the use of the garden during school hours.
- c. Guides and chaperones students during garden activities.

## **G. Council Election Procedures** (*updated May 27, 2014*)

### **1. Officers and Committee Chairs**

- a. These positions are two-year terms, with half open for election each spring.
- b. At the first February meeting, the Council must form a committee to supervise the election process. This committee consists of all the Class Representatives and must designate an election supervisor to coordinate the process and communication with the Council. The election supervisor may currently hold a position, but may not run for an officer or committee chair position in the election.
- c. The election committee is responsible for publicizing the available positions, obtaining nominations, and announcing and administering the election process. The committee must develop a communication s plan and timeline for carrying out the election process, and report the plan and timeline to the Council at the second February meeting. Additionally, the committee must provide brief updates to the Council at each meeting during the election process.
- d. The election process must provide for:
  - i. Ample and timely notice of the open positions and election process and timeline to the Options community through means including the *Options Opus* and the Council Talking Points which are included in classroom newsletters;
  - ii. Availability and distribution of candidacy forms to the Options community to be submitted consistent with the timeline established by the election committee; and
  - iii. Regular updates to the Options community on the elections process, including announced candidates and uncontested positions, through means including the *Options Opus* and classroom newsletters.



- e. Consistent with the timeline established by the election committee, which may not be later than May 31:
  - i. Unopposed candidates are considered to be elected; and
  - ii. A vote of the Options parent community must be held to fill any open position for which there are multiple candidates with notice, ballot distribution, ballot collection, and the reporting of results to be conducted consistent with the process developed by election committee.
- f. The election supervisor will inform and confirm all newly elected council members. Newly elected members begin their terms at the first June Council meeting.
- g. The Council may fill positions for which there are no candidates.

## **2. Classroom Positions Outside of Council**

- a. An announcement soliciting candidates for classroom positions outside of 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 parent orientation meetings, class potlucks, and first class meetings.
- b. A person who wishes to be a candidate for a classroom position outside of the Council should notify the classroom teacher 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 may choose to share the position, or elections must take place with notice, ballot distribution, ballot collection, and the reporting of results to be conducted consistent with a process developed cooperatively by the classroom teacher and the Council President or the President's designee.
- e. The Council and classroom teacher may work collaboratively to fill positions for which there are no candidates.

## **3. Unexpired Terms** *(amended May 2013)*

- 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 must appoint an individual to serve out the remainder of the term.
  - 2. The Council must report prominently in the *Opus* and classroom newsletters that such an appointment has occurred, including the circumstances of the position vacancy and the name of the appointed individual, and solicit nominations for the position for a period of 30 days. If no nominations are received, the appointed individual shall serve out the remainder of the unexpired term.
  - 3. If, during the 30-day nomination period, one or more additional nominations are received for the Council officer or committee chair's unexpired term, then a special election must be held with notice, ballot distribution, ballot collection, and the reporting of results to be conducted consistent with a process developed by the Council. If the vacancy occurs in February, March, or April, and if one or more additional nominations are received for the unexpired term, the position must be contested through the annual election process described in section VII.G.1. of the *Handbook*.

4. 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 appointment or election is necessary.
- b. Class representative
1. If a class representative resigns or becomes incapacitated, the parents in that classroom, in conjunction with the classroom teacher and Council President or the President's designee, shall elect 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 fill the vacancy as soon as possible.

## VII. Parent Partnership in the Options Program at Lincoln School

Options is a community of families who have chosen a program where parents are partners in their children's education. Our program goal is for each adult to contribute at least one hour of program support a week.

Families who choose this program will be involved in their children's learning and the daily activities & governance of the program. Parent involvement is a founding principle of the Options Program.

### A. Parent Information Center

The Parent Information Center in the school Workroom (where the copiers are) is the place to find:

- Copies of Council meeting minutes.
- Parent meeting minutes.
- Back issues of the *Options Opus*.
- Messages to and from parents and teachers.
- Blank forms (including reimbursement slips).
- Other important information about Options program.
- Books, articles and videos on such subjects as child development, education, parenting issues, and parent training sessions.

### B. All School Parent Meetings

Parent meetings provide a variety of opportunities, including:

- **Program Issue Nights**
  1. Share views and concerns about school issues.
  2. Provide input on Council policy development.
  3. Learn about school events, activities, and needs.
- **Parent Education Nights**
  1. Parent meetings also provide education for parents on program components, such as child development and education, instructional strategies, and curriculum.
  2. The Council Vice President arranges childcare for all Parent Education Nights.
- **Family Social Events**
  1. Sock Hop
  2. Socials
  3. Potlucks
  4. Learning Celebrations
  5. Harvest Festival
  6. Spring Earth Day
  7. Annual Auction
  8. Lincoln Art Walk
  9. Etc.

## C. All School Classroom Meetings

- Fall Classroom Picnic (date set by teacher)
- Fall Classroom Orientation & classroom elections
- 3-4 Classroom meetings as determined by teacher and classroom team to address such topics as: classroom parent help training, community building, classroom learning celebrations, etc.

## D. Ways Parents and Community Can Volunteer in the Classrooms

A cooperative relationship of teacher, child, and family is the foundation of learning for students in the Options Program. To support learning, the emphasis of parent involvement is working in the classroom. Parent and community volunteers directly support the efforts of teachers and student learning. Parent involvement is essential in providing experiential learning, field trips, enrichment activities, fundraising, school governance, and social events.

There are ample opportunities for parents to be involved in special events, evening commitments, gardening, working in the greenhouse, curriculum support that can be done at home, and myriad other possibilities.

(Please see the following menu for additional ideas.)

<b>Classroom Activity</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Art	Teacher
Assist with curriculum in the classroom especially for center times	Teacher
Assist teachers with tasks	Teacher
Bulletin Boards	Communications Chair
Class Shopper	Teacher
Class charts - handwritten or calligraphy or sketches	Teacher
Cooking	Teacher
Curriculum focus - offer your expertise in an area of study	Resources Coordinator
Field Trips	Teacher
Geology	Resources Coordinator
Help teach kids jobs so they can contribute	Teacher & EA's
Hobbies	Resources Coordinator
Library Book Collector	Coordinator
Gardener Helpers	Greenhouse Committee
Music	Resources Coordinator
One-on-One with Child	Teacher
Recess Games - come spend a lunch hour or 20 minutes	Educational Assistants
Research for Classroom	Classroom Coordinator
Room Clean up and organizer	Classroom Coordinator
Sharing Family Culture/traditions	Resources Coordinator
Sports	Resources Coordinator
Story Telling	Resources Coordinator
Technology	Resources Coordinator
Typing Class Books	Teacher
Wood Working	Resources Coordinator

## **VIII. Enrollment and Outreach** *(adopted April 3, 2007)*

### **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 C.6 and C.7 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 placement and services through the student's Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) before participating in the lottery. Program and enrollment information is broadcast during the spring for the following school year.

The Olympia School District newsletter publishes the timeline and enrollment information. This newsletter is distributed to all families in the district. Day care centers, community centers, and area businesses in the area are also provided program and enrollment information. Informational flyers are distributed to all elementary schools in the district.

### **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. Informational meetings are arranged for interested families to meet with the principal, teachers and with the Enrollment Committee. Parents must attend one of the two informational meetings presented by the Options enrollment committee. Parents must also complete a lottery participation form and return it at one of these informational meetings or to the Lincoln School Office by the deadline to participate in the lottery. Parents are encouraged to visit the classrooms during the scheduled classroom observation time. Families expressing interest after the spring lottery may have their names put on a Post Lottery Waiting List (see C.5 below).

### **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, Section C.6 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:
  - Were admitted through the lottery and continue to live in the Olympia School District,
  - 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.
3. Siblings of students in the program (Children living in the same household are considered siblings.) Sibling stagger policy: Siblings of graduates shall be given priority in kindergarten

admission, equivalent to the priority given siblings of currently enrolled students. Families must follow the regular enrollment procedure.

4. Participants in the most recent spring lottery, based on the following prerequisites:
  - Parent(s)' attendance at an Enrollment Committee information meeting.
  - Submission of the lottery participation form by the cutoff date.
  - Residency in the Olympia School District (residency must be established by August 1).
5. Students on the Post Lottery Waiting List who reside in the Olympia School District.
6. Students living outside of the Olympia School District who attended Lincoln the previous year. Section C.7 applies with respect to siblings.
7. Students living outside the Olympia School District who have participated in the lottery. The out of district lottery spots are determined on an annual basis, i.e. if spaces become available for out of district students, they are only guaranteed for that year. Siblings are admitted only if out-of-district spots are available at their grade level. Historically, out-of-district families have not been offered spots, due to in-district demand.

#### **D. Leave of Absence Request** (*adopted 3/14/2006*)

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 parent 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 parent 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

#### **E. Extended Kindergarten**

In addition to half-day kindergarten, the Olympia School District offers Extended Kindergarten (Extended K) at Lincoln Options. Extended K is an optional program that is not financially supported by the district, but is paid for by the parents whose children are in the program.

##### **1. Access**

In order to allow equal opportunity of access to Extended K for siblings, neighborhood children and lottery children, an Extended K lottery is conducted in spring. In order to participate in the lottery, parents have to register their child at the Lincoln school office and indicate their preference for Extended K on the Kindergarten Preference Form by the deadline. Children who are not placed in Extended K through the lottery will be automatically placed in half-day kindergarten, and are also placed on a waiting list according to the lottery result.

##### **2. Payments**

In order to allow access to Extended K regardless of financial ability, Options Community Council negotiated with the OSD to approve a payment system that allows families to pay what they can afford. Parents are asked to commit to a monthly payment amount according to what they can afford, allowing those who are able to pay more than average to support those who can not afford the average amount. The OSD has been clear that this system can only continue if costs are covered fully each school year.

The Enrollment Committee contacts the OSD office regarding annual costs, informs parents of the system, gathers commitment forms, and, if necessary, asks parents to reconsider and increase their pledges. The viability of the system depends on each year's parents to fulfill their commitments.

## **IX. General Information**

### **A. Classroom Concerns and Issues**

Frequent contact between parents and teachers provides many opportunities to learn about student progress and class activities. Parents should remember to discuss their children's progress with the teacher at appropriate times. Parents should schedule special appointments with the teacher to hold lengthy discussions.

### **B. Where to Direct Questions and Concerns**

**Class Representatives** should be your first contact if you have concerns about Lincoln School or Options Program policy. Your class representative is also the first person to call when you don't know whom to contact!

**Class Volunteer Coordinators** are the people to call for answers to questions about scheduling your time to help in or out of the classroom, the classroom newsletter, snack schedule, & field trips.

**The Options Community Council** sets policies and sponsors projects that address program-wide issues. Everyone is welcome to attend Council meetings. Call the President in advance if you wish to place an item on the agenda. There is also a "Community Comment" period at the end of every 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 President** chairs Council meetings. The President serves as liaison between the Options Program, the Olympia School Board, the Principal, and the district administration. Contact the Council President if you have issues you wish to bring before these bodies. The Council President may be able to help you address your issue more effectively. Doing so will reduce confusion in the program's relations with these bodies. If you plan to address the School Board or the district administration directly, please be sure to represent yourself as an individual parent, rather than as a representative of Lincoln School or the Options Program.

### **C. Classroom Grievance Process**

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

1. Parents 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 parent 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 (parent, teacher, and child) commit to a plan to resolve the concern.
3. If the concern cannot be resolved, the parent or teacher may arrange a conference with the Principal and may choose to include supportive, skilled, or knowledgeable mediators. This extended group is likely to include any of the following: Class Representative, Resource Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, or a parent trained in mediation strategies. Again, the goal is creative efforts to resolve the issue in the best interest of the child.

## **D. Teacher Grievance Process**

1. It is the parents' responsibility to take their concerns directly to the teacher.
2. If the concern cannot be resolved, either the parent or the teacher may arrange a conference with the Principal.
3. If, after discussion with the Principal, no resolution has been reached, either the parent or the teacher may choose to arrange a conference to include supportive skilled or knowledgeable mediators. This extended group will most likely also include one or more of the following: Class Representative, Volunteer Coordinator, Council President, and other council officers.
4. Council is notified if no agreement is reached.