

Our Transformation Story

Lieder Elementary

2025-2026

Lieder Elementary is a place where every student's genius is honored, and every learner is empowered to lead. When I became principal in 2019, I saw bright, capable students who did not yet believe in their own potential. A 5th grader wrote me a letter that year saying, "Thank you for coming to Lieder when no one else wanted to." That moment clarified my purpose: every student who walks into Lieder Elementary must know that their school is exceptional, their voice matters, and their leadership is needed.

After completing the N2s Principal Visioning Institute, Cohort 13, our guiding coalition developed our transformation target aligned directly to Article III of the Visioning Document, specifically:

- III.j – "Students' voices are respected, and their feedback is actively solicited regarding their learning and the tasks they are assigned."
- III.k – "Teachers' voices are respected, especially regarding student performance, curriculum development, and program evaluation."
- III.l – "Parents' voices are respected and included in feedback processes regarding their children's learning and how they support learning at home."

To bring these principles to life, our community collaboratively created the mission: At Lieder, we LEAD — we are Loving, Encouraging, Accountable, and Determined. We organized all campus work into three pillars: Student & Staff Leadership, School Culture, and Academic Growth & Achievement. Teacher-led committees were formed to ensure that staff had a voice in guiding decisions across every pillar.

Student Voice in Action (III.j)

Students helped design classroom environments, selected inspirational quotes for hallways, and established leadership roles across the campus. Students now set goals, track and celebrate their academic and leadership progress, analyze their own growth data, and lead their parent conferences. Their goals and celebrations are collected in a Leadership Portfolio. Every year, students keep their favorite items in their portfolio, allowing them to celebrate their accomplishments throughout their tenure on campus.

Teachers are constantly finding ways to give students voice and choice in their learning, from determining how the room should be set up to choosing what activity to work on, and setting their personal academic goals and celebrations. When students speak, we listen.

Students have a voice in academic as well as non-academic initiatives. While many students participate in a variety of clubs and activities that teachers voluntarily offer, such as Fun Run Club, baseball, football, soccer, cheer, gardening, and student leadership, we noticed that several students did not have the opportunity to participate due to challenges with transportation. Therefore, we began to implement a monthly practice, where every student is able to participate in a student choice club across the grade level. We know that success in preferred, non-academic tasks transfers to learning how to succeed at challenging academic skills. Club Friday brings simple joy where every student can blossom in an area that they absolutely love.

Teacher Voice in Action (III.k)

Teacher-led committees meet monthly to evaluate progress and bring recommendations back to grade levels. Teachers collaborate in PLCs to design innovative instructional practices, increase student discourse, and incorporate student choice into both learning tasks and assessment formats. Teacher input informs curriculum pacing, intervention strategies, and even the design of schoolwide leadership and academic systems. These structures guarantee that teachers influence all major decisions and feel empowered to take instructional risks. The teacher's voice is celebrated by the leadership team through their own systems for goal setting, analyzing data after every assessment, and creating systemic celebrations for both the staff and students when their goals are achieved.

Not only do teachers have input in the art of teaching and learning, but also in every aspect of Lieder. As one example, every year we evaluate our transformational progress through comprehensive surveys, collaboratively review the data, and make adjustments accordingly while responsively planning for the following school year. Last spring, when our survey revealed that only 73% of 4th and 5th graders felt known and understood, our guiding coalition responded immediately. Staff reviewed the list of students and identified at least three caring adults for each child, ensuring every student had trusted relationships and meaningful daily connections.

Parent Voice in Action (III.l)

Parents participate in family surveys, monthly engagement events, student-led conferences, and targeted learning opportunities like weekly "Parent University", where bilingual families learn strategies to support their children at home. Parent feedback directly shaped supports such as take-home math tools, bilingual resources, and adjustments to communication practices. A parent recently shared, "I watched the school come alive, and I see my child thrive every day because of the work you have done."

Culture, Leadership, and Learning Transformation

Visible transformation is felt in every hallway. Student work and the tracking of grade level goals line the walls, students confidently lead announcements, and assist across the building. Student peer mentors and buddy classes celebrate growth together. Teachers have shifted their instructional practices to increase student ownership of learning, including inquiry-based tasks, peer justification routines, and increased choice in demonstrating mastery. These instructional shifts reflect a collective willingness to innovate, collaborate, and trust student leadership.

Our transformation is not only felt but also measured. Lieder Elementary experienced an 11% increase in its overall TEA rating last year and over 1% growth in attendance. Feedback cycles from students, staff, and families guide our annual goals and adjustments, ensuring continuous improvement grounded in stakeholder voice.

Today, Lieder Elementary is a thriving community where students lead with confidence, teachers innovate with purpose, families partner in meaningful ways, and our mission, At Lieder we LEAD, shines through every learner, every classroom, and every hallway.

