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Lincoln logo artwork courtesy of the Indiana Historical Society

# INDIANA ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION

*Celebrating the 200th Birthday of the Greatest American President*

August 14, 2008

Dear Indiana Educators:

On February 12, 2009 the nation will celebrate the 200th birthday of our nation's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. Indiana and other states will be celebrating this date with numerous events, reenactments and tributes to this most revered man.

The Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (IALBC) and the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) would like for every school in Indiana to have the opportunity to qualify as an official Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial School. This process would include the following timeline:

**On or before September 30, 2008** Schools submit plans to the Indiana Department of Education to be implemented during the 2008-09 school year.

**2008 – 2009 academic year** Plans are implemented.

**On or before May 1, 2009** School principals submit a letter to IDOE, verifying that plans were successfully completed.

**May 2009** IDOE sends certificates of award to schools.

Many schools to this date have indicated that plans will best be implemented during the 2008 – 2009 school year, the year of Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday. The letter first sent in October 2007 from IALBC and IDOE concerning these projects indicated that schools could also implement plans during the 2009 – 2010 school year, but we hope that all participating schools will be able to complete their projects by May 2009.

Once the IDOE receives the principal's letter verifying that the school's plan was successfully completed, a certificate, suitable for matting and framing will be sent to the school. This certificate will be signed by the chair of the Commission and by the Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction. Each qualifying school and the name of its principal will be posted on the IALBC website at [IndianasLincoln.org](http://IndianasLincoln.org).

Project proposals must include the following guidelines:

1. An interdisciplinary unit must incorporate a minimum of three (3) subject areas and align with Indiana's Academic Standards.
2. One entire grade level within a building needs to complete the project for the school to qualify; however, inclusion of students in all grades is encouraged.
3. The interdisciplinary unit must include a major writing assignment.
4. The interdisciplinary unit must include an Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial display within the school and provide a grade level appropriate reading list pertaining to Abraham Lincoln. Such a list for grades K-12 is available at [IndianasLincoln.org](http://IndianasLincoln.org) under Teacher Resources, which could be helpful in developing schools' individual reading lists.
5. The school, through its student government, Honor Society, or any other school organization, must do a community service project that will honor Abraham Lincoln. The following are examples of potential projects:
  - Planting of Abraham Lincoln Lilacs at the school or in the community. This beautiful lilac represents Walt Whitman's poem, *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd*. Lilacs can be obtained free of charge to principals by contacting Dan Bortner, Director,

- State Parks and Reservoirs, (317) 232-4136 or at [dbortner@dnr.in.gov](mailto:dbortner@dnr.in.gov). The Bicentennial Commission strongly recommends schools consider planting lilacs as a legacy to Abraham Lincoln.
- Presenting a Veterans' Day program and/or sending cards to the veterans at a veterans' hospital. Veterans were obviously important to both Abraham Lincoln and to his wife Mary, who demonstrated their commitment by visiting troops in the field and by visiting the wounded in the hospitals. Schools could contact their local veterans' organization for names to invite to their program or contact local veterans' hospitals for the hospital's policy on handling communications from schools.
- Providing or serving food at a shelter for the homeless or on Thanksgiving Day. President Abraham Lincoln established a day of Thanksgiving by Proclamation during the Civil War.
- Raising funds for an organization such as a children's hospital. Abraham Lincoln experienced the death of his sister Sarah and her child in childbirth on January 20, 1828; and he himself lost two of his four sons—Edward at the age of three on February 1, 1850 and William at the age of eleven on February 20, 1862 during the Civil War.
- Raising funds for the school's media center to purchase books related to Abraham Lincoln.

We hope that every school in Indiana will participate in commemorating Abraham Lincoln as part of this Bicentennial Celebration.

Proposals should be sent to:

Sarah Fronczek, Fine Arts Specialist  
 Office of Curriculum and Instruction  
 Indiana Department of Education  
 151 West Ohio Street  
 Indianapolis, IN 46204  
 Phone: 317-234-1751  
 Fax: 317-232-9121  
[fronczek@doe.in.gov](mailto:fronczek@doe.in.gov)

**Please note that the September 30, 2008 application deadline is an extension of the previous May 31, 2008 date.**

Several potential lesson plans are listed on the Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's Website at [IndianasLincoln.org](http://IndianasLincoln.org). Please consider utilizing them as you plan your interdisciplinary units.

Information from Dr. Suellen Reed's office will also be sent to schools concerning a state-wide reading project, "One State One Story: Indiana Reads About Lincoln." This initiative would be a very suitable inclusion as part of the process to qualify as an Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial School. The IALBC and the IDOE are collaborating to provide a grade level appropriate book about Lincoln to each Indiana accredited school in commemoration of the Bicentennial.

Finally, we hope that every school will celebrate Abraham Lincoln's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday on February 12, 2009. A school-wide program to assure all students' awareness of this important anniversary would be a meaningful way to honor and celebrate the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

Sincerely,



Connie Nass, Chairwoman  
 Indiana Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission



Dr. Suellen Reed  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction