



Dear Christa McAuliffe Families,

Hello and welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! My name is Lisa Daniel, and I am the School Counselor at McAuliffe Elementary. I have been the counselor here for 21 years and it is my 27th year as an Elementary Counselor, and in LWSU. I spent my early years in education as an elementary Classroom teacher (grades 2, 3 and 4) and as a reading specialist in Southern California. My husband and I have raised our four children in the 26 years we have lived in the beautiful city of Sammamish. Being a school counselor and working with children is my passion and I am so grateful to do work that I deeply love. I'm so glad you and your children are part of our McAuliffe family - it is a magical place. The warmth, love, support, and kindness here is incredibly special. ❤️

I provide students with comprehensive school counseling services addressing areas of academic, personal/social, and career success. To meet the needs of all students, they are supported in several different ways. I teach lessons in the Classroom monthly throughout the school year, small groups in my office for 6-week sessions as well as meeting with students individually as needed. My role also includes the support of staff, parents/families, and the greater community. My goal is to ensure that each child has equal opportunity to achieve success and feel safe and respected both in and outside of school.

These past few years have been unlike any other! Stress and anxiety have been at an all-time high in both children and adults. Many children are affected by pandemic social delay including the struggle to focus, have positive relationships with others, and manage big emotions. Even though we have been back in person for a few years now, the aftereffects of remote learning are still with us. Please know that the social-emotional wellbeing of our children is a top priority for me in my work here at McAuliffe.

Classroom Guidance: I will be teaching in every classroom throughout the school year as part of a comprehensive school counseling program. We have researched based programs we use here such as - **Whole Body/Respectful Listening and Learning (K-1)**, **Kelso's Choice (K-2 focus but reviewed in all grade levels)**, **Second Step Digital Social Emotional Learning Program K-5**, **Second Step Anti-Bullying Program, K-5** and **Purposeful People/Character Strong** as well as other programs and skills. Counseling lessons include topics such as Career/Interest exploration, recognizing feelings, self-regulation/Zones of Regulation program, friendship, social filter, conflict resolution/problem solving, joining groups, and other social emotional skills. My counseling program here at McAuliffe follows the standards of



ASCA/American School Counselor Association. Information on lessons and resources on what your child/ren is learning in class will be sent home via Parent Square on a regular basis.

Our Second Step Program has 5 units, and lessons are focused on these areas:

- Growth Mindset and Goal Setting
- Emotion Management
- Empathy and Kindness
- Problem Solving
- Bullying Prevention

Small Groups: Throughout the school year, I will hold small group sessions for students needing extra/small group support in particular social/emotional areas. Parents will be notified if their teacher refers their child and will receive information on what skills will be taught and practiced. Parents can refer their child as well as opt their child out of groups if they feel it's necessary, although most parents are happy for their child/ren to receive this focused group support. Referral to a group can be student (self), parent, or teacher. Some of the groups that I **may** have this year include New Student Groups – all students new to McAuliffe are welcome, Managing Strong Emotions (anger/anxiety/stress/self-regulation), Social Skills, Friendship/Conflict Resolution, Changing Families group support for separated/divorced/blended families, Power Me Up (assertiveness training,) Stop and Think, and Worry Wise/Anxiety. **All Kindergarten students** during the first half of the school year will attend a 2 – 3-week **Kindergarten Friends** group to help them learn school readiness and important life skills here at school. I will notify you when it is your child's turn to be in this fun group.

Individual Support: Students can request a meeting with the counselor whenever they wish to discuss any issues of concern and that they find important in their lives. Parents, teachers, and other school staff are also able to refer students. Parents can email or send a message in Parent Square with concerns or requests for either an in-person or virtual meeting with me. I provide short-term counseling and individual check-ins with students but will need parental permission if several meetings are necessary. Long term therapy and more intensive counseling will be referred to other mental health professionals in our community. I am happy to provide a list of referrals for these professionals in our area.

Please see the checklist I have included with this letter to see if you might wish to receive more information or have questions about any of the resources listed.

I am looking forward to a positive and engaging school year! Feel free to contact me if you have issues/concerns or questions.

In partnership,

Lisa Daniel, M.Ed., LMHCA

McAuliffe School Counselor

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425-936-2620



For more information on **Social Emotional Learning** through our **Second Step** program go to:

<https://www.secondstep.org/>

Kelso's Choice Conflict Resolution Program also offers free resources and parent information.

<https://kelsoschoice.com/>

Zones of Regulation is the digital program I use to teach self-regulation. We use this throughout the school year. Their website offers an overview and free resources for parents.

<https://zonesofregulation.com/>

Purposefull People/Character Strong is another program we use for social emotional learning. You can check out their website and sign up for parent newsletters and information at:

<https://Characterstrong.com/purposefull-people/>

