

## **Educational Leadership Portfolio**

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EDU592- Principal Internship

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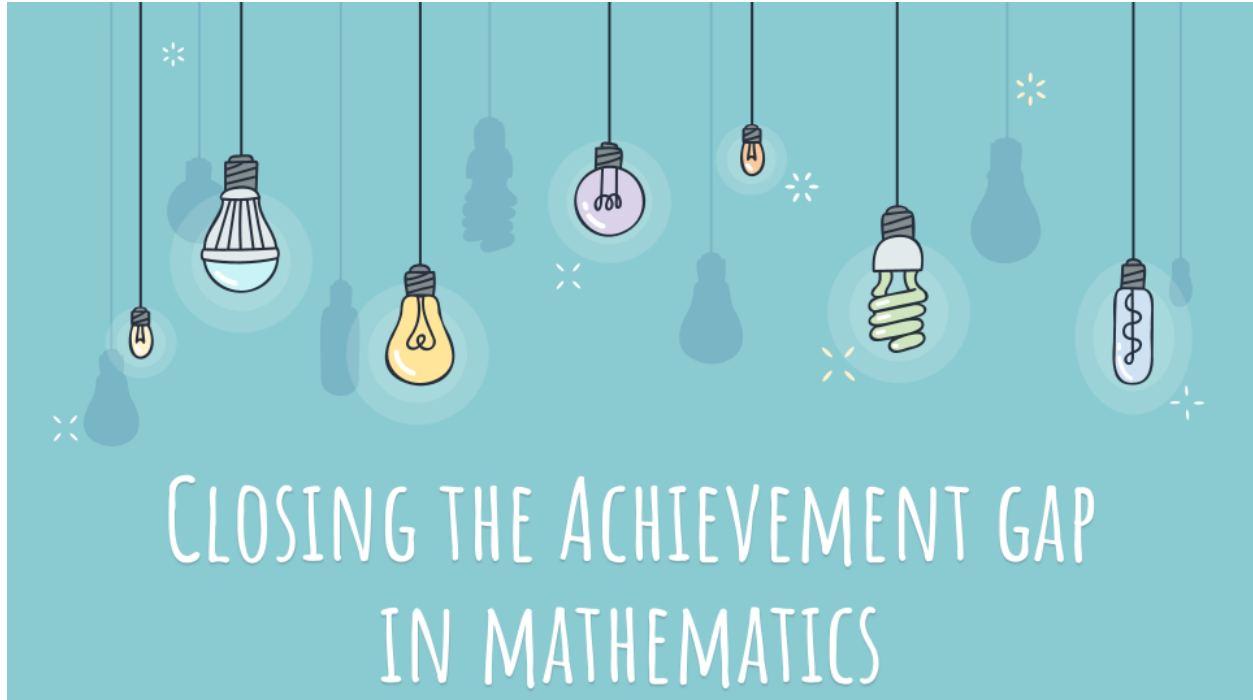
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## Research Report- Assignment #2



[Presentation on Closing the Achievement Gap in Mathematics](#)

## **Closing the Achievement Gap in Mathematics: Annotative Bibliography**

Anonymous. (2007, March 26). *What the Research Says About Effective Strategies for ELL Students*. Colorín Colorado; Colorín Colorado.

<https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/what-research-says-about-effective-strategies-ell-students>

The research cited supports using the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) to close the achievement gap for ELL students. SIOP offers a systematic protocol that delivers systematic, high-quality instruction. Eighty-six percent of students exposed to the instruction using the SIOP model scored at grade level or above on state math assessments. Other effective strategies cited were: collaborative learning communities, multiple representations, building on prior knowledge, and instructional conversion.

Bonesrønning, H., Finseraas, H., Hardoy, I., Vaag Iversen, J. M., Nyhus, O. H., Opheim, V., Salvanes, K. V., Sandsør, A. M. J., & Schone, P. (2021). Small Group Instruction to Improve Student Performance in Mathematics in Early Grades: Results from a Randomized Field Experiment. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 216.

<https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3979348>

This study explores the effect of math scores on students aged seven through nine when pulled out for regular, small-group mathematic instruction of three to four hours per week. These groups were heterogenous and compared with a similar group not receiving the pull-out small group instruction. The teachers providing the prescribed intervention received no additional training but a handbook with detailed instructions on implementing the intervention. The study showed that the treatment group students increased their performance by 0.066 standard deviations compared to the control group.

Small-term effects were even promising, showing students in the control group had a treatment effect of 0.158 higher on formative mathematic assessments than those in the group not receiving the intervention. This study showed that low-dose tutoring (small-group pull-out intervention) increased outcomes for students of all ability levels.

Bruce, C. D., & Ross, J. A. (2008). A Model for Increasing Reform Implementation and Teacher Efficacy: Teacher Peer Coaching in Grades 3 and 6 Mathematics. *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue Canadienne de L'éducation*, 31(2), 346–370.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20466705>

This study explored the effect of teacher self-efficacy in mathematics instruction on the overall mathematic achievement of students in grades three through six. The hypothesis was that increased teacher self-efficacy positively affected student achievement because teachers exhibiting high efficacy excel at encouraging student autonomy, meeting the needs of low-ability students, and influencing student perceptions of their abilities. The study examined three factors to define high teacher efficacy: facilitating student-to-student interactions, supporting student construction of mathematical reasoning, and selecting effective mathematic tasks. Professional Development in mathematics instruction was provided to teachers, and their level of efficacy was rated before and after the professional development. The study found that the professional development program positively affected teachers' beliefs about their capacity to teach mathematics. When test scores were compared after the teachers received the PD with scores prior, they found an across-the-board increase.

Cason, S. (2022, April 12). *15 Strategies for English Language Learners*. Education to the Core. <https://educationtothecore.com/2022/04/15-strategies-for-english-language-learners/>

English Language Learners (ELL) don't learn differently than others, and they just need different supports as they acquire English during the learning process. From the foundation Education to the Core, Sara Cason addresses fifteen strategies to support ELLs in the classroom. Many of the strategies cited fall under the umbrella of creating a caring, supportive, and culturally aware classroom. Building background knowledge, visual models, and using a microphone or amplification device are also cited as effective tools and strategies to use in the classroom.

Chang, Yu-Laing. (2015). Examining Relationships among Elementary Mathematics Teachers' Efficacy and Their Students' Mathematics Self-efficacy and Achievement. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education, Volume 11*(Issue 6), 1307–1320. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eurasia.2015.1387a>

Evidence has shown that student self-efficacy begins to decline in seventh grade. Student self-efficacy is a predictor of their mathematical achievement. This study proved that in elementary grades, the more efficacious a teacher is about mathematics, the higher their students' mathematical academic achievement. Fifty-eight fifth-grade classrooms participated in the study for a total of 58 teachers and 1244 students. This study took place in Taiwan and utilized the Elementary Mathematics Teacher Efficacy Instrument (EMTEI, Chinese version) to measure teachers' efficacy beliefs concerning mathematics. The study found that teacher efficacy substantially impacted student efficacy in mathematics, resulting in higher achievement in mathematics.

Colorado Department of Education. (2022). *English Language Development Guidebook | CDE*

Chapter 4. [www.cde.state.co.us. https://www.cde.state.co.us/cde\\_english/eldguidebook](https://www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/eldguidebook)

The Colorado Department of Education outlines the suggestions for all Language Instruction Education Programs (LIEP) in the state. They outline the delivery of instruction entirely in English and three levels of support for students whose primary language is not English. For ELLs, they break the levels into Limited Primary Language Support (L1), Primary Language, Literacy Only Support, and Full Primary Language Support. Several effective bilingual models are provided, including Dual Language Immersion, Developmental Bilingual Education, Transitional Bilingual Education, and Native Language Content Classes. In addition, they provide ESL Models as well. ELS models include Structured Immersion, SIOP, ELD Instruction, Pull-out Instruction, Co-teaching, Modeling, Flexible Pathways, L1 Literacy Classes or First Language Literacy Classes, Newcomer Centers, and Tutoring.

Flores, Alfinio. (2007). Examining Disparities in Mathematics Education: Achievement Gap or Opportunity Gap? *The High School Journal*, 91(1), 29–42.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2007.0022>

This journal article suggests that the “achievement gap” is, in fact, more of an opportunity gap. Research shows that the number one factor in student growth and achievement in mathematics is access to highly trained teachers with a high level of teacher efficacy in mathematics instruction. There is a disparity in teacher candidates between high-income, suburban communities and under-resourced, hard-to-staff schools

serving predominately low-income and minority students in central urban communities or poor rural areas.

Hanushek, E. A. (2014). *Boosting teacher effectiveness. What Lies Ahead for America's Children and Their Schools* (pp. 23–35). Hoover Institution Press.

Teacher efficacy is one of the most influential characteristics that affect student achievement. This value-added analysis demonstrated that some teachers consistently show greater gains in student learning year after year than others. In one study by Hanushek, teachers at the top of the quality distribution showed gains of 1.5-grade level equivalents compared to a less-than-par teacher's gains of 0.5. This particular study only studied students from minority and low-income families. This indicates that family background means less than that of a good teacher when it relates to student achievement. A teacher at the eighty-fourth percentile of teacher quality is shown to close between one-quarter and one-third of the gap in math achievement. This means that the achievement gap in low-income and minority students could completely close when exposed to a high-quality teacher versus an average teacher for three to four years.

Kaplan, E. (2019, April 12). *6 Essential Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-essential-strategies-teaching-english-language-learners/>

Emily Kaplan interviewed a wide range of educators with extensive experience working with ELLs. Her interviews revealed six common themes: relationships, being culturally responsive, teaching language skills across all content areas, slowing speaking, increasing wait time, incorporating native language, utilizing technology, and using multiple modalities to present material.



Stronge, J. H., Ward, T. J., & Grant, L. W. (2011). What Makes Good Teachers Good? A Cross-Case Analysis of the Connection Between Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 62(4), 339–355.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111404241>

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase studied student gains in mathematics. The second phase took the top seventeen and the bottom fifteen teachers to participate in an in-depth cross-analysis of their instructional and classroom management practices. The findings showed that students in the top teachers' classrooms had a gain of 19 percent compared to students in the bottom teachers' classrooms, which had a 10 percent loss from pre-test to post-test. The study showed that the top teachers had fewer classroom disruptions, better classroom management skills, and better relationships with students than the bottom teachers. This study also supports the theory that teacher effectiveness has a greater impact on student achievement in mathematics than socio-economic status. The number one factor in student growth and achievement, according to this study, is the teacher.

## **PLC Leadership- District RTI Process Professional Development (Assignment #4)**

[RTI Process Professional Development Slides](#)

[Ellicott District RTI Process](#)

[Note Catcher](#)

[Exit Ticket](#)

[High-Quality PD Checklist](#)

## **Achievement Gap- Assignment #5**

### **Achievement Gap**

“Achievement gaps occur when one group of students (e.g., students grouped by race/ethnicity, gender) outperforms another group and the difference in average scores for the two groups is statistically significant” (National Center for Educational Statistics, n.d.). Ellicott School District sits 14 miles East of Colorado Springs, CO, in a rural community where the hub of the town is the three schools located on eighty acres of land. The district serves a 229 square mile-area. The Elementary comprises approximately 520 students pre-K through fifth grade, with 18.6% of its population identifying as English as a Second Language, predominantly Hispanic. This diversity is a tremendous source of pride, yet as 67% of the students in the district qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch, this diversity also brings challenges.

Examining the 2022 CMAS scores and the 2022 Transitional School Performance Framework Data for Ellicott Elementary School shows an achievement gap for Multi-Lingual (ML) students' reading and math achievement. The State Transitional Performance Framework ranks the Elementary school in the seventh (English) and eighth (math) percentile for academic achievement. Before the COVID pandemic, students in vulnerable populations, including ML students, “were already facing inequality in everything from resources (ranging from books to counselors) to student-teacher ratios and extracurriculars” (Simon, 2021). Now more than ever,

schools and districts need to embrace their ever-growing diversity and examine what they are doing to close achievement gaps in these populations.

Assistant Principal Crystal Howell, and the Elementary Multi-Lingual (ML) Director, Alyssa Briggs, sat down to talk about Ellicott and their efforts to target the achievement gap among ML students. “Targeting this population within our district is not exactly new, but bringing on an ML Director is the first step taken in beginning the work to close the achievement gap for ML students” (C. Howell, personal communication, January 23, 2023). With the addition of Mrs. Briggs to the school last year, the interventions for ML students have changed drastically. All ML students now receive a minimum of one hour of grade-level support in the ML classroom, where Mrs. Brings works not only on their WIDA goals but also supports grade-level content to support what is being learned in the classroom. In addition to this support, ML Students below grade level in reading receive an additional 30-40 minutes of intervention with a reading specialist. In addition to Mrs. Briggs, the school has three ML Paras that float among kindergarten, first, and second grade to support students in the classroom.

Ellicott is not alone in this issue. In the 2019 *Nations Report Card*, a theme that “emerges is the appearance of a growing divergence in achievement between the highest and lowest achieving students. This divergence is seen for the nation as a whole, across states, and for student groups by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status” (Willburn et al., 2021). As educators and leaders, it is time we begin to think outside the box in education. What worked ten years ago does not work now, especially after the pandemic. Challenging the status quo and looking for creative ways has to go to be how schools and districts move forward to meet the needs of the ever-increasing diversity in schools. During the 2022-2023 school year, as a leadership team, we prioritized the improvement of reading scores by building a 45-minute intervention block into

our master schedule to provide targeted interventions to all students. Teachers use their time during professional learning communities (PLC) to analyze data, form groups, and collaborate about practice. These groups are fluid; students move in and out of groups as they master the targeted skill. As part of our most recent Unified Improvement Plan (UIP), the Elementary intends to build in time for the same practice to happen in math. This more targeted intervention time benefits all students, particularly ML students, who often require more time mastering academic vocabulary and benefit from more concrete learning examples in order to master a skill.

One of the most significant issues in schools nowadays is the achievement gap. American school systems tend to expect ML students to acquire the English language to succeed in school. “This trend which has historical roots that continue to this day, describes how native speakers of languages, such as Spanish, are more often than not discouraged from using their native languages” (Fredricks & Warriner, 2016, p.312). While MLs are acquiring this new language, they are also falling further behind English-proficient students. As the number of non-English speaking students continues to rise, implementing things as Ellicott has is a start. The introduction of bi-lingual classrooms could be an excellent next step, allowing ML students to learn grade-level content while acquiring English and also allowing native English speakers to acquire a second language as well. We as educators need to explore our biases and implement programs that will not only make the most significant impact on closing the achievement gap but maybe just keep it from happening in the first place.

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[https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/blog/mathematics\\_reading\\_2019.aspx](https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/blog/mathematics_reading_2019.aspx)

## **Financial and Fiscal Responsibility**

“Professional behavior, personal integrity, and appropriate ethical and moral conduct must be the defining qualities of any leader. Nothing less will do” (Sorenson & Goldsmith, 2018, p.209). This quote is essential when applying it to school financial procedures. The Bible gives several examples of the importance of being good stewards. 1 Corinthians 4:2 says, “Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful” (NIV). As Christian leaders, we must be above reproach regarding the money entrusted to us by the public to educate the next generation. Educational leaders must be nothing short of 100% honest and upright in their actions. Our priority must be to utilize educational funds to provide students with the best education possible in a way that supports the school and district vision.

Ellicott School District’s biggest fiscal priority is providing enough space for students to learn. This is evidenced by the two new buildings you will see being built next to the elementary and high schools. Last year, when the Department of Defence was choosing the United States Space Force headquarters, Shriever Air Force Base was contending with Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, for the appointment. It was projected that our district would grow tenfold in just a few years if Shriever received the appointment. The Board of Education approved the construction of two large steel buildings that would provide six additional classrooms for both the elementary and the high schools. Although headquarters was appointed to the base in Huntsville, and we have seen a steady decline in student enrollment over the last three years, the school board decided to continue with the structures. Considering the continued decrease in enrollment and the district's high teacher turnover, this may not be the best use of funds. Staffing in Ellicott is based strictly on numbers. As a district, they have chosen to keep class sizes at a minimum. Currently, the largest classroom in the district has a 22:1 student-to-teacher ratio.

However, this should be of greater importance because they pay the lowest salaries out of the twelve districts in the county and the high teacher turnover every year.

Accountability for administration takes on a very down-to-earth practice considering there are only four buildings in the district. Once funds are disbursed to buildings, administrators use them as they see fit for their school. The only exceptions are separate funds from things such as grants and special funding such as Title I or READ Act funds. Procedural safeguards include a two-step authentication process at the building level when all purchases go through the principal and the school bookkeeper. Spending is then combed through at the district level by the district financial officer. If an administrator needs funds beyond what they have in their general fund, they must go to the school superintendent for approval, and if there is money elsewhere, then the purchase is approved. All credit cards are also approved by the board of education.

CDE's Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook guides districts on budget and accounting procedures. In Colorado, districts must be fully transparent with the public on their finances. One of the ways that Ellicott complies is by participating in a yearly audit conducted by outside auditors. The results of this audit are then posted on the district website for viewing. Another measure they comply with to ensure financial transparency is specific to the district budget. Once the school board has adopted the district budget, it is made public. All schools in Colorado require full financial transparency. The information for each district can be found on the CDE website.

“Good policies can play an important role in ensuring financial integrity and keep your schools running smoothly,” (Janofski, 2016). 2 Corinthians 8:21 tells us that we should not just do what is right in the eyes of God but also in the eyes of man. All you have to do is look at headline news to see that fiscal corruption is a real temptation. As public leaders, we are



entrusted with large budgets that the public trust that we will use to provide the best possible education to the students and families we serve. As Christians, all we need to do is look to God's Word and ensure we seek him for guidance daily. "The integrity of the upright guides them" (Proverbs 8:1a, NIV).

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## **Emergency Policies and Procedures**

In a survey of 875 school districts, “6 in 10 teachers and administrators said that fear of a “purposeful mass homicide” at their schools—by an outsider or a student—was a key factor in their worries about safety” (Gewertz, 2022). In a longitudinal study, “the country saw a rise in cyberbullying, student behavioral issues, and school shootings over ten years, concluding with the 2019-20 school year” (Stanford, 2022). Ellicott School District does not seem to mirror these statistics. Currently, only ten school safety incidents have been reported to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE), one at the middle school and nine at the high school. Of these reports, nine were physical attacks without weapons, and one incident at the high school was a threat of physical violence with a weapon.

Last school year, I investigated the district's safety plan, policies, and procedures. At that time, what I found was disturbing. As of the 2021-2022 school year, Ellicott School District still needed a safety plan. When I approached the superintendent, I was handed the guidelines for developing school safety plans but with no actual policies and procedures included. Schools across the district were doing monthly fire drills and one tornado and lockdown drill per year. After a discussion with the Elementary Dean of Students and our admin secretary about the situation, it was brought to the attention of our superintendent, and the safety committee began meeting to take steps to look at district school safety policies and procedures.

This school year, as a district, we began using the LifeSpot platform to be used in the case of active shooter incidents. Staff was trained during the beginning of the year's professional development. LifeSpot links directly with law enforcement through an app

loaded onto every employee's phone. It allows direct communication and real-time tracking during a lockdown or active shooter situation. Other improvements in safety that have been observed this year are feedback forms and debriefing after every safety drill, lockdown drill each month, and tornado drills are being done every six weeks. There is no official district procedure for evacuation, but when staff was asked, some replied that they thought that we brought students to a local farm somewhere.

### **Active Shooter Procedures**

In an active shooter situation, staff will all be alerted through the LifeSpot app on their phones. Staff will secure students according to the school lockdown procedures. Staff inside the building are to lead students to the nearest room that can be locked and get shelter. Doors should be locked and barricaded. All windows should be shut and locked, and lights turned off. All communication will occur through the LifeSpot application, and staff will report which students are with them at their location. Any additional information that needs to be communicated to assist law enforcement in locating the shooter is done through the app. Staff members who are outside are to take students and begin to lead them away from the school. They are also required to inform law enforcement of their location and students that are with them through the app when it is safe and as long as they are still within the geofence.

### **Severe Weather**

Ellicott knows the devastation of what severe weather, especially tornadoes, can do to a community. "Just before 7:30 p.m. on Memorial Day — May 28, 2001. Many residents still were out of town, or just returning, from the holiday weekend. The twister hurt 18 people, left 60 others homeless, destroyed the town's high school, and caused nearly \$9 million in damage to the school district alone" (News, 2013). Each building within the school district

has a tornado shelter where students are evacuated. At the elementary school, students are evacuated to the shelter by grade level and have designated spots in the shelter, also called the Commons. Once students are in their designated spot, they sit with their legs crossed, head down, and arms over their necks.

The staff must grab their emergency bag during all safety drills and procedures. These bags contain safety items and other items that may come in handy during an emergency. Each teacher in the building also has a class roster and color-coded cards in a folder that they take in an emergency. Green means teachers have all of their students, and everyone is okay; yellow means they have extra students or missing students; red means they have an emergency and need help.

The safety of our students should always be our priority. Walking buildings, playgrounds, and parking lots should be routine. Ensuring proper supervision is crucial. Educational leaders must ensure that every student entering our building is physically and emotionally safe. Safety is a pillar in Marlow's Hierarchy of Needs; without it, we cannot expect students to learn and thrive.

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## Working and Planning for School Improvement



[Supporting ELL Students](#)

[Time Log](#)