

Flipping the Lens: Research for Protecting English Learners' Rights

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Content Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand how subtractive/deficit thinking affects students, teachers, and programs
- Learn the power of flipping to an asset-based lens in galvanizing the community and improving student outcomes
- Use one district/university partnership example to examine how change can be created in participants' own communities

Language Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand and use the following terms:
 - Subtractive Schooling
 - Deficit thinking
 - Asset thinking
- Articulate what some of the major equity issues faced in their districts are and how they can be addressed in partnership

How was your weekend?



Immersion Movie



Reflection Questions

1. What did you notice about the family?
1. What do you think their lives are like?
1. What did you notice about the teacher?
1. What might she have done differently?

Deficit Thinking

English learners, immigrant-origin students, and language-minoritized students have historically been viewed through a deficit lens (References 7, 23) through:

- First language as hindrance/deficit (13, 21)
 - e.g. persistent achievement gaps between ELs and non-ELs (18)
- Previous academic preparation insufficient (6)
- Parents uninvolved in children's education (1, 21)

Subtractive Schooling

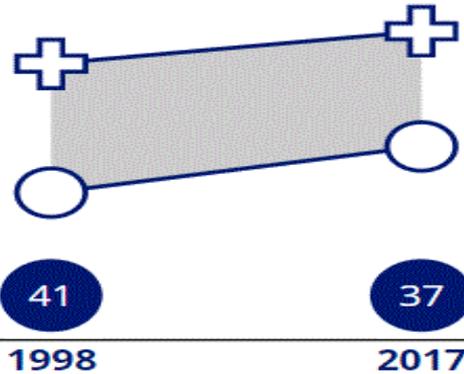
New immigrant students often experience:

- Improvised programs (14)
- Low expectations (6, 15)
- Under-resourced schools (11)
- Deficit-based educational policies (10, 16, 17)

Consolidating Deficit: Typical Display of National Data

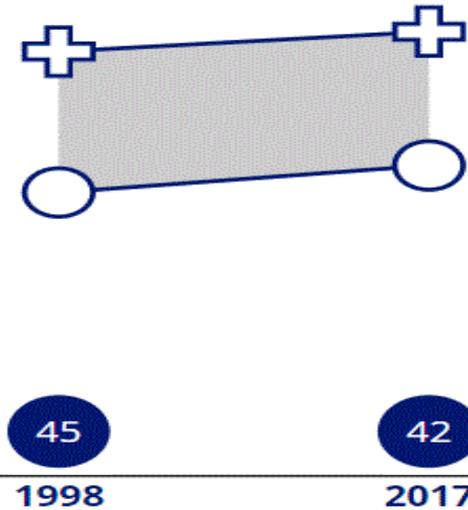
Reading
Nation public schools
Grade 4

SCALE
SCORE

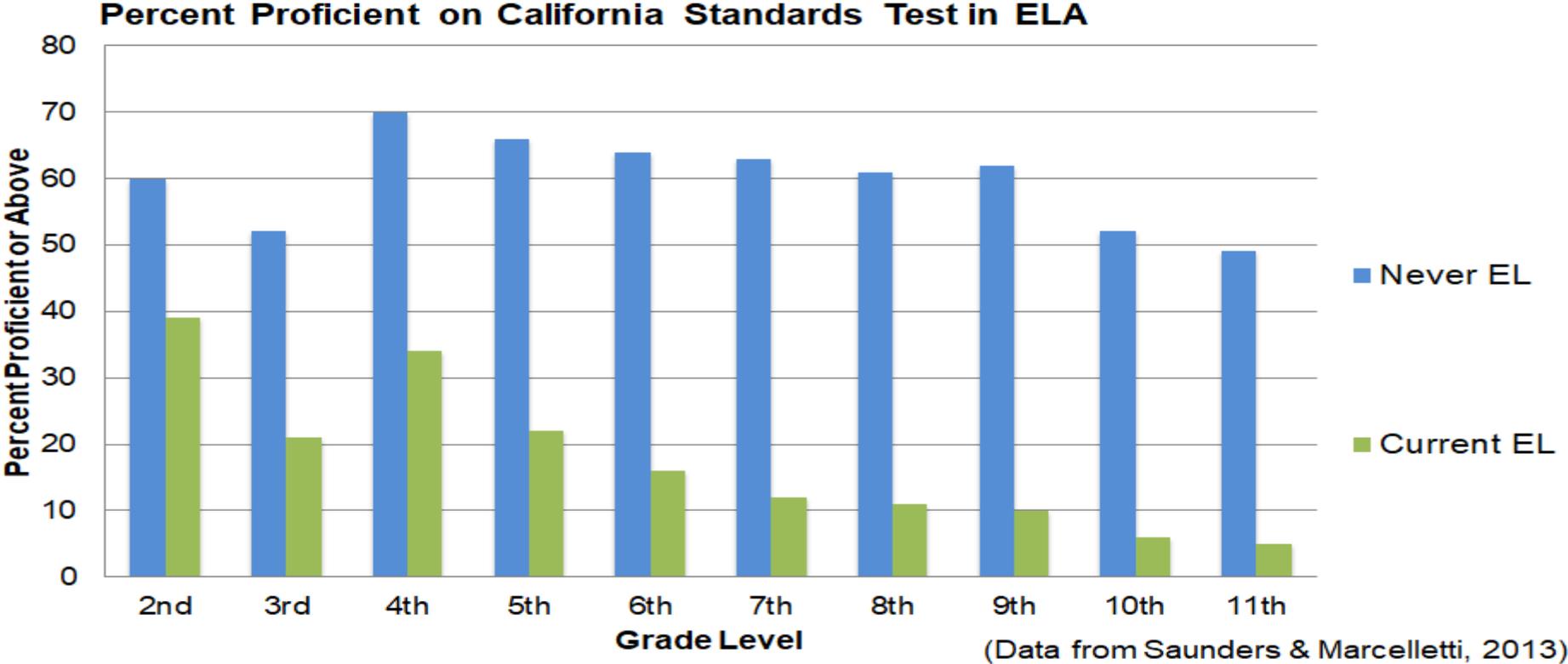


Reading
Nation public schools
Grade 8

SCALE
SCORE

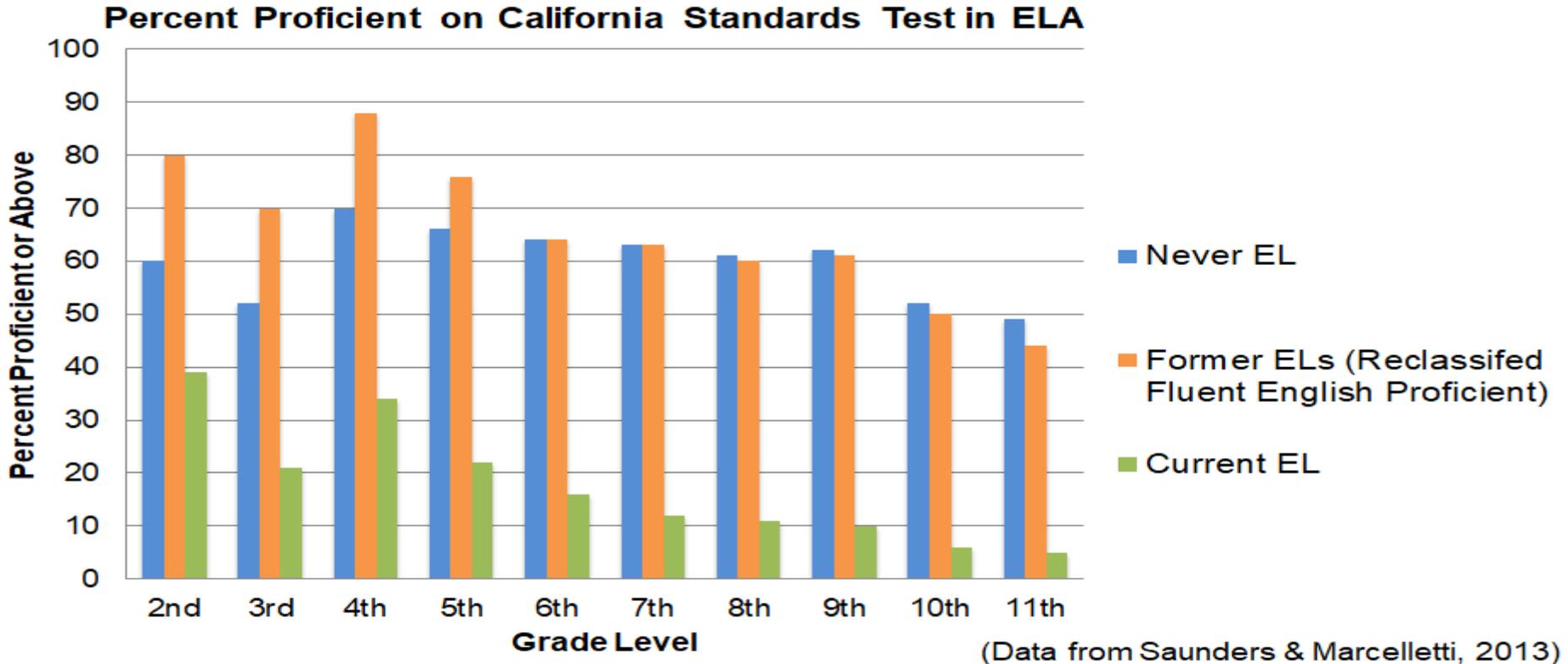


Binary Achievement Gap



From Mavrogordato (2019)

Nuanced Achievement 'Gap'



From Mavrogordato (2019)

Flipping the Lens: National Data

Focusing on only current ELLs while excluding Former ELLs, or focusing on the gap rather than the growth, creates a misleading picture:

- Underestimates the population initially classified as ELLs
- Highlights and overestimates achievement gaps
- Decreases likelihood of detecting positive changes (22)

Flipping the Lens: Asset Thinking

Bilingualism offers many advantages:

- Cognitive (2, 5)
- Academic (19, 23, 24)
- Socioeconomic (4, 12)

And few disadvantages:

- Bilingual children control smaller vocabularies in each language than monolingual children (3)
- Bilingual adults have slower vocabulary retrieval times (3)

District Context (2018 NJDOE School Performance Report)

- Urban and rural markers
- In past, Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico
- Now, ELs from Oaxaca, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Central America
 - Substantial population of unaccompanied minors at high school
- AY 2017-2018
 - $N = 10,533$ students
 - *Farms* 64% of district
 - ELs = 10% of district
 - 90%+ are Spanish-speaking, 90% farms

District Context

- Offers ESL and TBE programs
- District went from not making progress targets for ELs for several years to becoming a NJDOE Model Program
 - 2016-2018 for Elementary Bilingual
 - 2018-2020 for Elementary and HS Bilingual, and Elementary and HS ESL
- Other district initiatives compete with limited funding of all programs

A Complete Turnaround

District went from not making progress targets for ELs for several years to becoming a NJDOE Model Program

- 2016-2018 for Elementary Bilingual
- 2018-2020 for Elementary and HS Bilingual, and Elementary and HS ESL
- Applying now for 2020-2022 K-12 Bilingual, 9-12 ESL, and Heritage Spanish/Russian programs

Method

- **Sample:**

- EL and non-EL students, $N = 626$
 - EL $n = 124$
 - non-EL $n = 502$
- Grades 3 - 5
- All have complete assessment scores AY 2014-15, 15-16, 16-17
- 3rd grade assessments are first year of PARCC administration (2014-2015)

- **Data:**

- 3 years of PARCC ELA composite and Math scores

- **Analyses:**

- On-going growth modeling analyses
- Dependent variables: ELA composite, Math
- Independent variables: non-EL, EL (2+years in ESL/TBE)

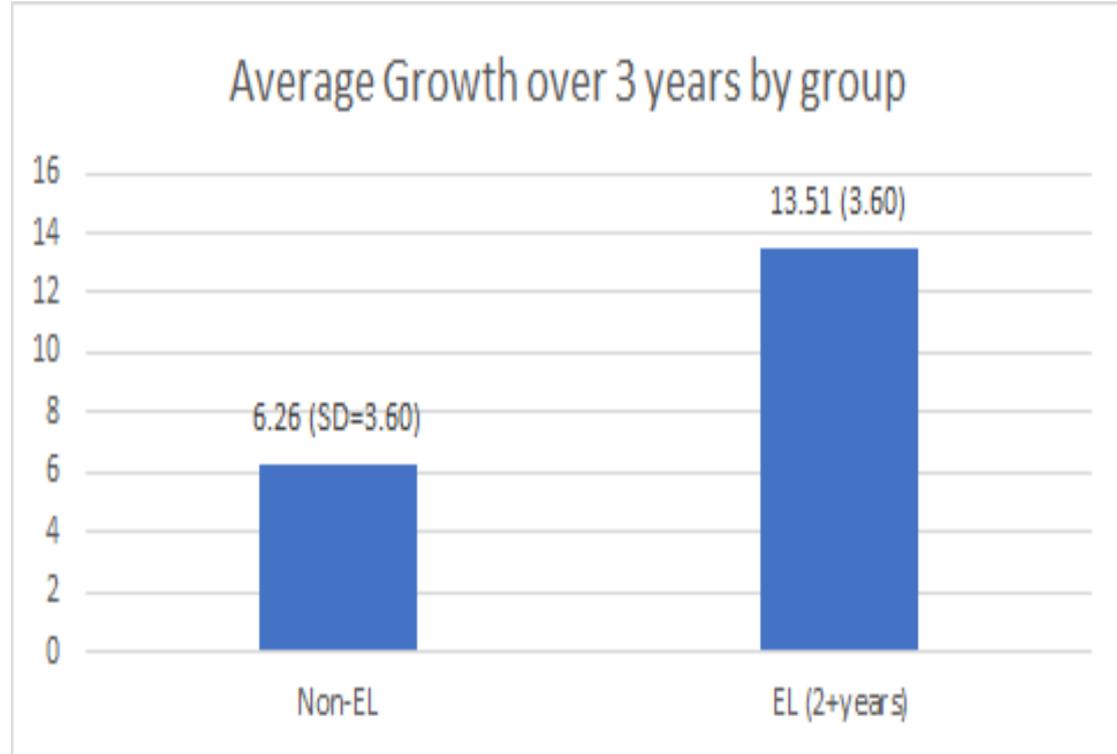
Descriptive Statistics: 3-year averages

Test	Mean across groups
ELA3	726.66 (34.17)
ELA4	738.18 (29.54)
ELA5	742.35 (29.57)

Test	Mean across groups
Math3	727.58 (26.92)
Math4	732.86 (26.21)
Math5	733.11 (24.75)

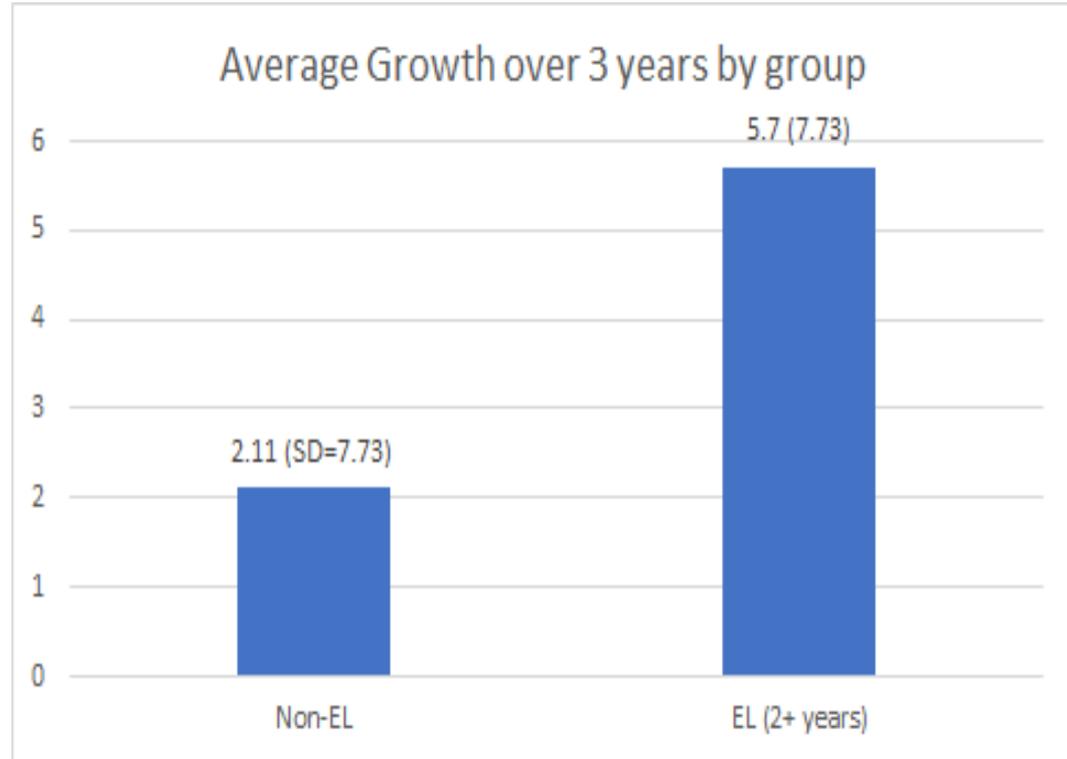
Preliminary Findings - Average Growth ELA

	Mean Time 1 (ELA3)
Non-EL	732.46 (28.05)
EL (2+years)	709.87 (28.05)



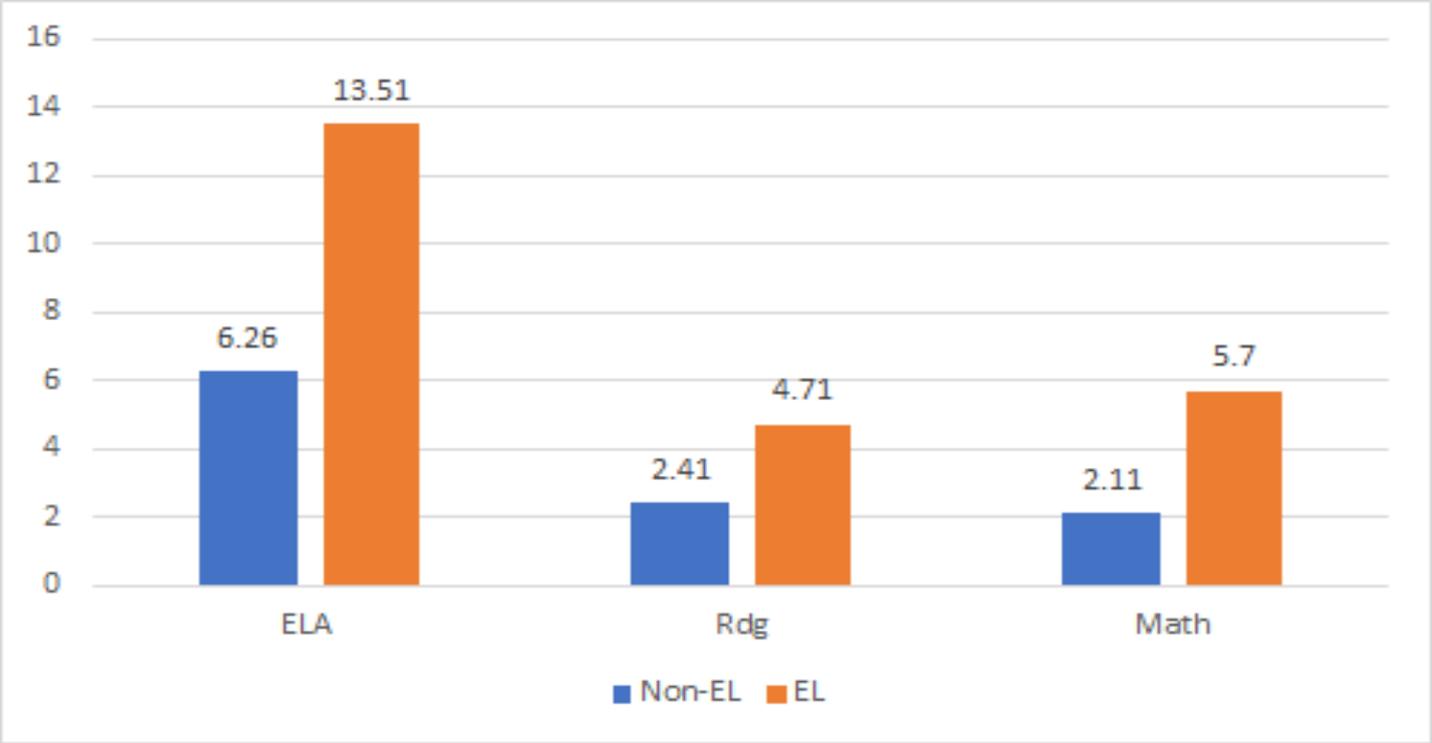
Preliminary Findings - Average Growth Math

	Mean Time 1 (Math3)
Non-EL	730.55 (25.33)
EL (2+years)	717.78 (25.33)



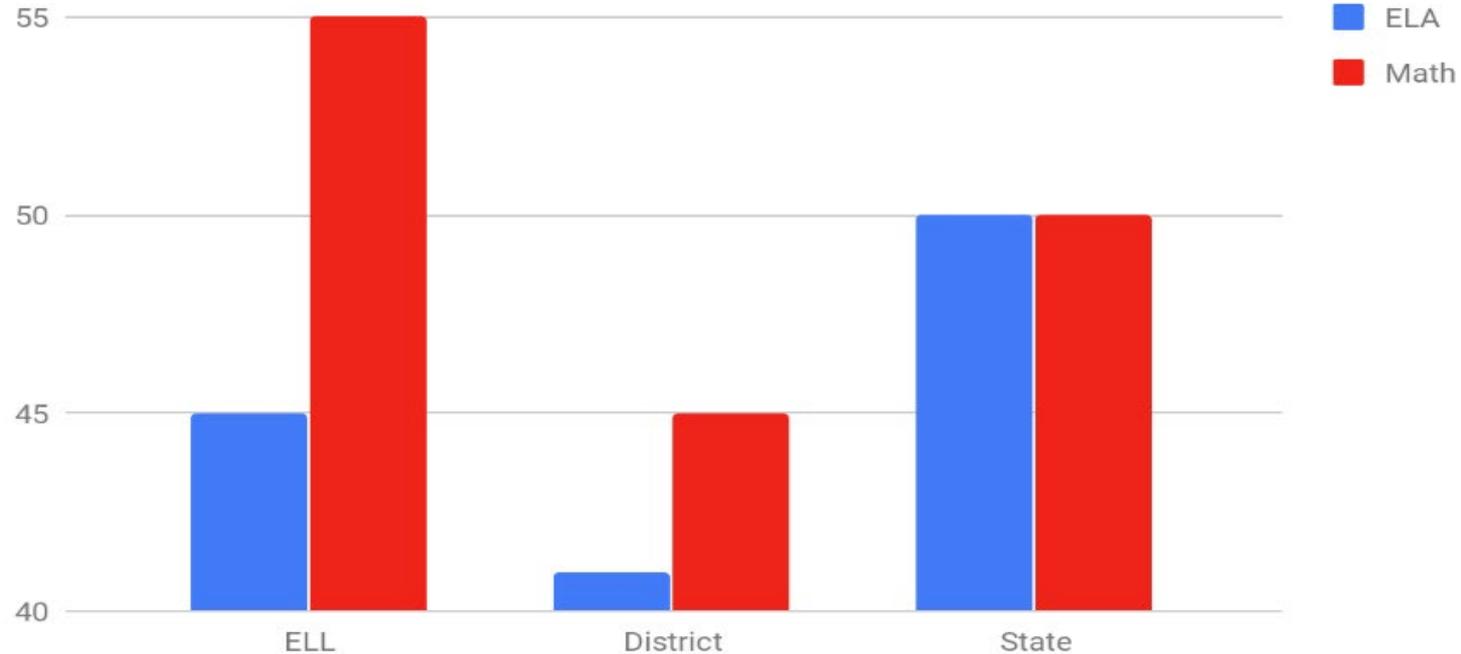
Preliminary Findings Average Growth across Assessments

Average growth by group over 3 years



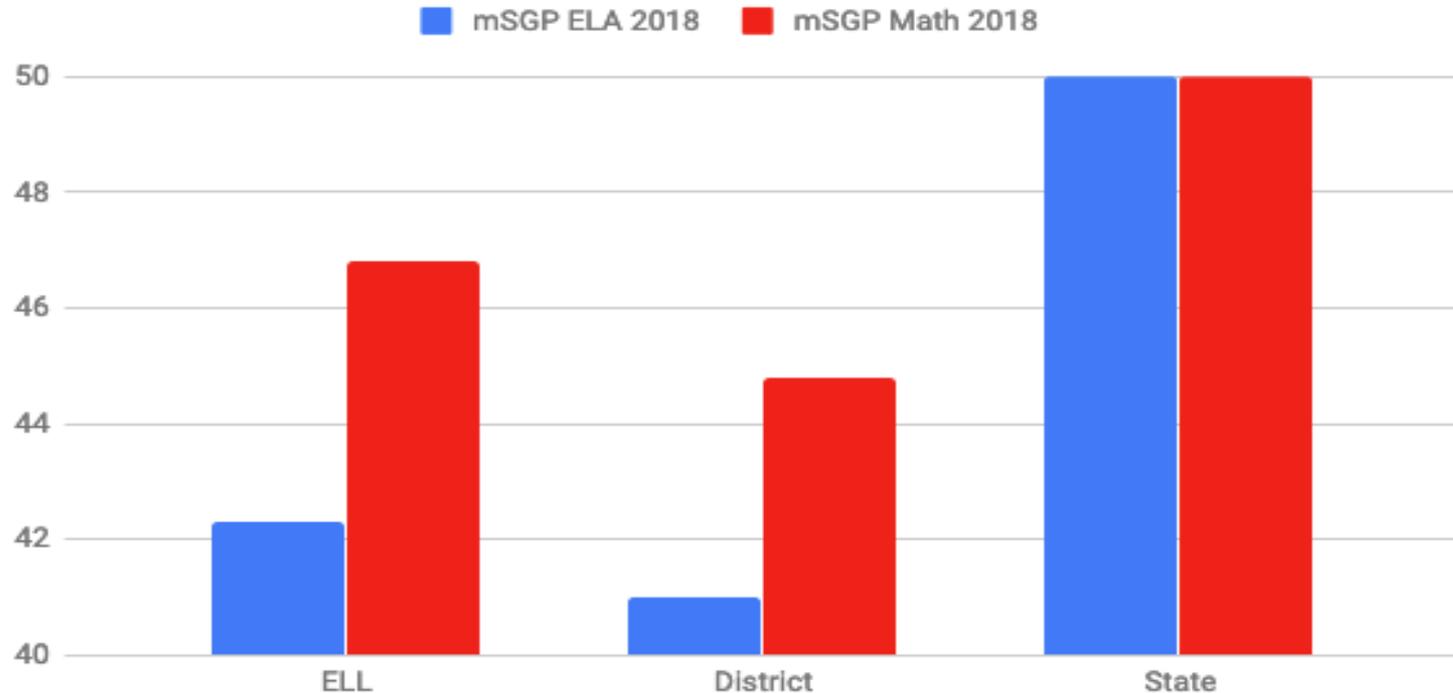
Aggregated Growth Scores 2017 VPS Grades 3-8

ELA and Math



Aggregated Growth Scores 2018 Grades 3-8

mSGP ELA and mSGP Math



Use of Data for Advocacy - Flipping the Lens

- Staff surprised to learn that ELs lead the district in growth
- Use of growth data in all professional development to challenge deficit lens both within the district and around the state
- Use of growth data professional development to instill collective efficacy and common goals
 - ESL/BE department largely has embraced asset-based orientation
- Competitive advantage in recruitment and retention

Use of Data for Advocacy - Parent/Community Involvement

- Parent-community involvement
- Growth data presented at Bilingual Advisory Committee
 - Sets tone of asset-based thinking in families, community stakeholders



Benefits of Partnership - School District

- School districts generate large amounts of data, but often do not have the human capital to analyze and generate actionable information
- Benefit of third party program evaluation
- Examining data through a different frame - having to think about the data differently
 - Framing in current empirical research
 - Framing as advocacy
 - Using data for school-community connections

Benefits of Partnership - University

- Contributes to the research field
- Contributes to research-based implications for specific district programming and teaching
- Supports university tenure requirements

Benefits of Partnership - Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice

- Fosters better supports (knowledge, people) for new district teachers coming from university
- Can generate more responsive and contextual teacher education program
- More targeted and relevant PD work based on research findings
 - Biliteracy working group in district
- Fosters better understanding of district logistics for teacher educators
- By creating 'living'/reciprocal connections between educational research and daily district decision-making

Future Endeavors in Partnership

- Changes in teacher education course design at University
 - Integration of (blinded) district data & program examples in teacher education courses
 - District teachers and administrators as invited speakers
- Possible pre-service teacher practicum site
- Continued study of the cohort or additional cohorts to create a richer longitudinal data set

Implications

- Growth data can be leveraged to contest deficit orientations
- Growth data captures longitudinal nature of second language acquisition
- Growth data captures a more nuanced view of language and academic development
- Growth data helps to manage language development expectations

Turn and Talk 1: Data

1. Which data do you feel are not sufficiently explored in your district?
2. Who has access to those data?
3. What would you need to do to prepare these data for analysis?
4. How would further analyses help your district?

Turn and Talk 2: Partnerships

1. What current needs does your district have?

1. What existing partnerships does your district have?
 - a. Are they being utilized to their full potential?

3. Brainstorm possible partnerships to meet currently unmet district needs
 - a. How would these partnerships get established?
 - b. How would they work reciprocally, collaboratively?
 - c. What resources would be needed?
 - d. How would outcomes be used?

The Power of Data for Flipping the Lens

- Data as an advocacy tool
- Development of shared vision among stakeholders
- Changes perceptions of ELs and EL achievement
 - Language proficiency takes time
 - Power of growth data

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