



University of Colorado
Denver

DPS Exemplary Schools Case Study:

FORCE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

WORKING DRAFT 2

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DPS UCD ELA Exemplary Schools Case Study Overview

The Denver Public Schools (DPS) University of Colorado Denver (UCD) English Language Acquisition (ELA) Exemplary Schools Case Studies investigated DPS schools with a high density of learners of English as a second or additional language and high levels of students who qualified for a free or reduced price lunch that were experiencing the most success with English language learners (ELL students). The study was conducted by the DPS UCD Research Collaborative between December 2010 and March 2011. The purpose of the study was to identify school-wide practices that have been successful in supporting the achievement of these students. Six schools (two elementary, two middle, and two high schools) were identified on the basis of five criteria: (1) an open enrollment policy, (2) at least 40% of total enrollment consisting of ELL students, and at least 100 English language learners enrolled, (3) a total School Performance Framework (SPF) rating greater than 49% for elementary schools, and greater than 45% for middle schools and high schools, (4) at least 50% of students in the school qualified for a free or reduced price lunch, and (5) high gains on the CSAP and CELA tests for the past three years relative to other schools serving the same grade levels. Two additional elementary schools, which did not meet all criteria, but have good reputations among area educators were also studied. The case studies involved three sources of data: 1) photographs providing environmental scans of the language resources and supports for ELL students in the schools; 2) documents and public information (e.g., websites) as well as student performance data; and 3) interviews with school leaders, teachers, and other support personnel. This report will detail the practices uncovered at Force Elementary School.

NOTE: This case study of Force Elementary is ongoing. These preliminary assertions and explanations are based on 6-12 interviews with staff members, photographic inventories, and archived data collected between December 2010 and March 2011 only. We anticipate that further study, e.g., observations in classrooms and additional interviews, will expand our understanding of the school's practices.

The following assertions emerged as key components contributing to the success of Force Elementary in working with English language learners:

- Force views itself as a community school, involving community and all parents including those who do not speak English in the school
- Force exhibits strong principal leadership
- Force has a strong, committed staff
- A culture of collaboration has been established at Force
- There is an emphasis on properly placing students for language acquisition, as well as adjusting student placements as necessary at Force; focus is placed on “getting it right” in the early grades so that they’re prepared to move forward
- Data, including formative and summative assessment of content and language, are strongly valued and used to make decisions about ELL students at Force

- ELA-S teachers and some additional teachers have embraced components of Literacy Squared
- Force has developed a strong language and print-rich environment that emphasizes academic language and bi-literacy

The following sections of this report will include a more in-depth explanation of the study, a brief history and demographic description of the school, and a more detailed narrative of the case study assertions and how the described practices are facilitating academic growth for ELL students at Force Elementary (to be found beginning on page 11).

DPS Exemplary Schools Case Study: Context and Purpose of the Study

As of October 1, 2010, there were 26,761 identified English language learners (non-exited ELL students in grades ECE-12) enrolled in Denver Public Schools. Of these students, 17,544 received ELA services at a designated ELA program school. Spanish was the primary language for 15,246 (87%) of these students, while other common languages included Vietnamese, Arabic, Somali, Nepali and Karen/Burmese <http://ela.dpsk12.org/>

Denver Public Schools and University of Colorado Denver are working in collaboration on the DPS ELA Exemplary Schools Study to examine practices within DPS schools in which learners of English as a second (or additional) language are outperforming their peers in similar schools. The purpose of the study is to provide guidance to DPS and other districts in improving the educational performance of English language learners by describing practices currently used in six DPS schools in which English language learners are experiencing the most academic success. The primary research question addressed by this study is:

- *What are the school-wide practices of schools that are successfully serving a high number of English language learners?*

This study was formulated in accordance with the Department of Justice Court Order, which provides guidance to and approval of the DPS English Acquisition program, and includes guidance regarding research on the effectiveness of DPS ELA programs. One goal of this study is to identify practices that have been successful across different school contexts. This report focuses on the practices at Force Elementary School.

Study Design and School Selection Criteria

This study of school practices involved three sources of data: 1) observations/photographs of language resources in the school environment; 2) documents and public information (e.g., school websites, newsletters) as well as aggregate data on student performance; and 3) multiple interviews with school leaders, teachers, and other support personnel. In this preliminary phase, the study did *not* include students as participants.

A three-step process was used to select high performing schools for English language learners in DPS. For the purposes of this study, English language learners at DPS were defined as those students who were currently receiving ELA services, opted out of services, or exited from ELA services.

Step 1: In order to select the case study schools, schools were identified at the elementary, middle, and high school level, which met four criteria:

- 1) at least 40% of the school's total enrollment consisted of English language learners,
- 2) at least 100 ELL students were enrolled at the school,
- 3) at least 50% of students at the school qualified for a free or reduced price lunch, and
- 4) the school received a School Performance Framework (SPF) rating greater than 49 for elementary schools, and greater than 45 for middle schools and high schools.

For the SPF, every school in DPS that contains at least one grade that takes CSAP (grades 3-10) is assigned one of the following accreditation ratings every September using data collected during the previous three school years: Distinguished, Meets Expectations, Accredited on Watch, Accredited on Priority Watch (added in 2010) or Accredited on Probation. Ratings then relate to how much autonomy schools are given, the support needed, corrective action taken and compensation earned by principals, assistant principals and teachers. For this study, the SPF rating was used to ensure that the schools chosen were not on probation and were meeting expectations or nearly meeting expectations (for all students, not only ELL students).

Step 2: Performance data for English Language Learners on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) Reading, CSAP Writing, CSAP Math and the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA) were analyzed for each school for the past three years. Schools from the initial list, which were making the largest gains were identified, weighting gains in 2010 the highest, 2009 second highest, and 2008 third. Data presented in Table 1 below show the three-year weighted averages of the CSAP median growth percentiles for each school and average gain (Z score) on CELA. Based on these criteria, three schools at each educational level, for a total of nine schools, were identified as candidates for the case study.

Step 3: The student recruitment and retention policies at the nine schools were investigated to determine whether the schools had policies for admittance or dismissal related to performance, special education needs, or behavioral problems. In narrowing the selected schools to six, researchers agreed that at least one school at each level should be a comprehensive neighborhood school, as opposed to a charter school or magnet school. The six schools included Bryant Webster Dual Language ECE-8 (study focused on the elementary grades), Force Elementary, Merrill Middle, West Denver Preparatory Charter – Federal Campus (a middle school), Abraham Lincoln High, and Bruce Randolph High.

Once the schools had been narrowed to six high performing schools, two additional elementary schools of interest were selected based on a combination of their relatively high performance and reputation among educators in the district. Both schools added additional characteristics to the pool of schools, including learners of English from diverse linguistic backgrounds and concentration on math and science. These two additional “reputational” schools were Goldrick Elementary and the Math and Science Leadership Academy (K-3).

History of Force Elementary School

Force Elementary School, a neighborhood school located at South Wolf Street and West Florida Avenue in southwest Denver, serves students in Early Childhood Education (ECE) through fifth grade. Lisa Mahannah is the current principal at Force. The mission of Force is to ensure the education of the whole child so as to develop 21st century learners. Force Elementary is designated as a Transitional Native Language Instruction (TNLI) school, meaning that students receive native language instruction in Spanish with supported English content instruction and English language development. As students’ English proficiency increases, they move toward supported English content instruction and English language development (ELA-E). Non Spanish-speaking English language learners receive ELA-E services.

Approximately seven years ago, Force Elementary became involved in a research project with CU Boulder called Literacy Squared, Transitions to Biliteracy, a five-year project, which continues to be a guiding framework for teaching English language learners. This project was brought in under the leadership of a previous principal (who lead the school for five years), and while the research project is no longer underway, the practices are still supported by the current principal and staff. Principal Mahannah is currently in her second year as principal. Prior to her tenure, there was one principal for five years and a one-year interim principal at Force Elementary.

Demographic Overview of Force Elementary School

In the 2009-10 school year (the school year based on which schools were selected for the study), 504 students were enrolled in ECE through fifth grade at Force Elementary. Of these students, 440 were in grades K-5. A large percentage of the students at Force were Hispanic/Latino (86%) and 56% of students spoke Spanish. Among the 2009-10 student body, 93% qualified for a free and reduced price lunch. In the 2009-10 school year, Force Elementary received an SPF rating of 71%, indicating that they were meeting expectations. Force is a NCLB sending school, meaning it did not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) last year.

Of the students enrolled in Force Elementary in the 2009-10 school year, 64% (282) were English language learners (including students currently receiving ELA services, students opted out of services, and students who have exited from ELA services). Among the ELL students at Force, 207 were designated as receiving ELA services, 63 as opted out of services, and 12 as exited from ELA program services. The large majority of the ELL students at Force spoke Spanish.

AMAO 1 (Annual Measurable Achievement Objective) is an indicator of ELL English language acquisition. It represents the number of students who are making progress on the CELA exam. In 2010, 53% of ELL students at Force were making progress. Further, the three-year (2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10) weighted average gain (Z score) on the CELA for ELL students at Force was 0.30 standard deviations above the mean, meaning they showing above average growth; this is compared to a state-wide gain of 0. Three year weighted averages are included here as these data are less subject to year-to-year fluctuations.

The three-year weighted averages of the CSAP median growth percentiles for English language learners (median growth percentiles indicate how well these students are growing in comparison with other students) were 66.7 in Reading, 67.5 in Writing, and 74.9 in Math, compared to the state average of 50. The median student growth percentile is the middle score if the individual student growth percentiles are ranked from highest to lowest. A “typical” school would have a median student growth percentile of 50.

The charts below display student demographics (including primary home languages and ethnicities of students throughout the school), the CSAP and CELA growth scores of ELL students at the school, and the proficiency levels of Force students on the CELA and CSAP. All non-exited ELL students (who include students who are opted out of services) take the CELA exam, which test students on four domains – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Students in grades 3 through 10 take the CSAP exam.

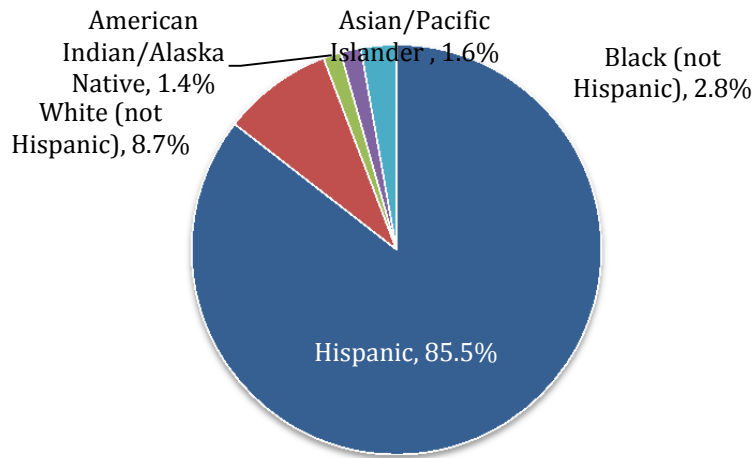
Primary Home Language Spoken by Force Students

LANGUAGE	
Spanish	56.3%
English	42.1%
Somali	0.7%
Vietnamese	0.5%
Chinese, Yue (Cantonese)	0.2%
Karen	0.2%
Total (N=554)	100.0%

Source: Administrator Portal pulled February 22, 2011 (the Administrator Portal uses data from the 2010-11 DPS October Count, matched with current student enrollment).

Note: Data describe students throughout the entire school, not just ELL students; data include students ECE-5th grade.

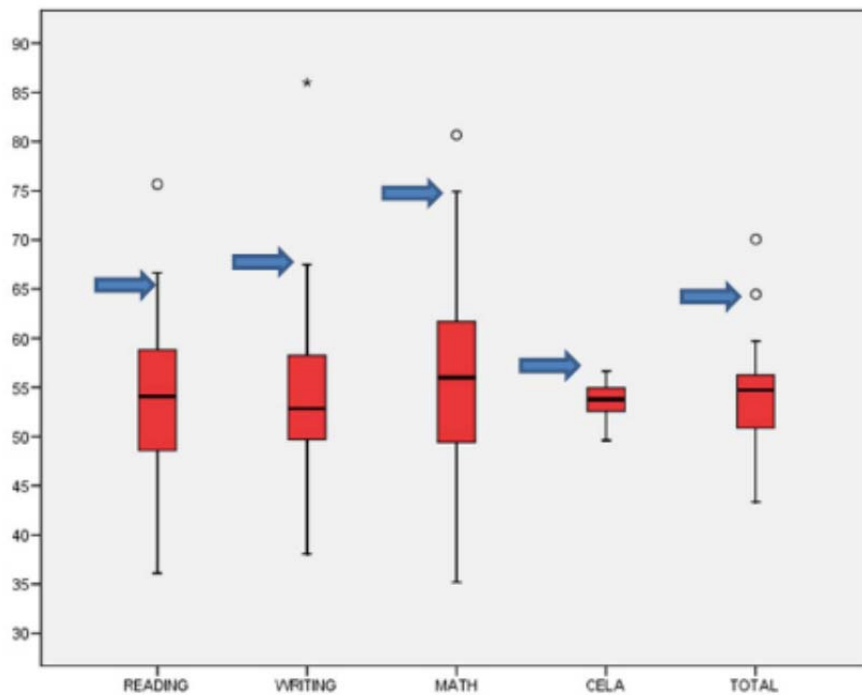
Ethnicity of Students at Force Elementary, 2009-10



Source: DPS Strategy Department, Count of Student Membership by Ethnicity by School, 2009-10 from October Count 2009.

Note: Data describe students throughout the entire school, not just ELL students; data include students ECE-5th grade.

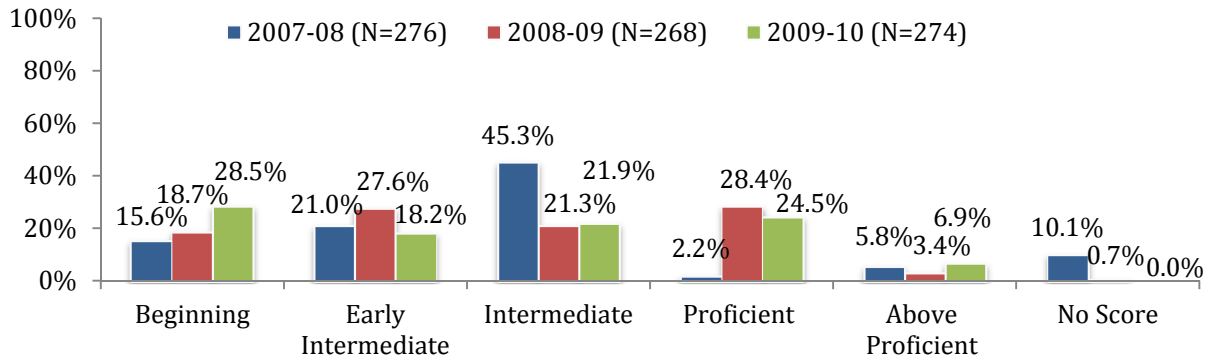
Achievement Growth of English Language Learners 2008, 2009, 2010 (arrows refer to Force)



Source: Developed using data from the DPS All Scores repository.

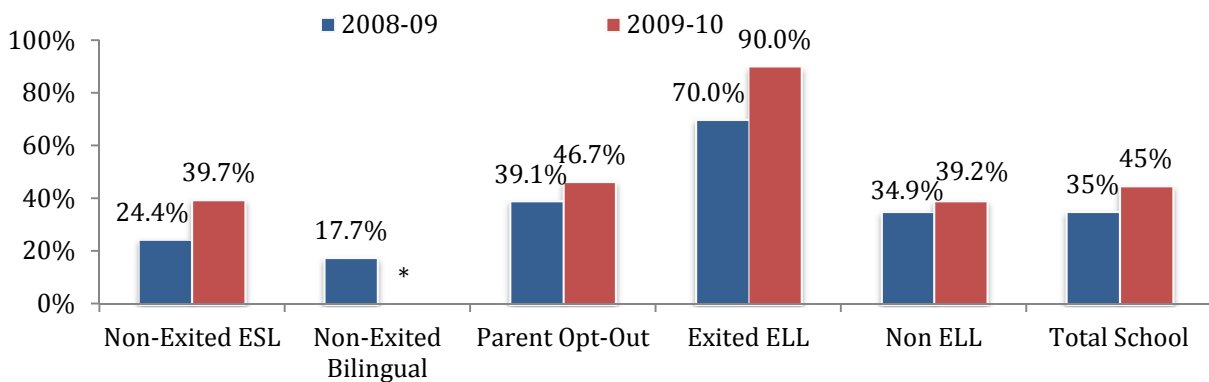
Note: Comparison includes 45 DPS elementary schools with more than 41 English language learners in grades 4 and 5 with CSAP growth percentiles.

English Language Proficiency Level, CELA Overall



Source: DPS Department of Accountability, Research and Evaluation, CELA Report 2010.

Percentage of ELL Students Who were Proficient or Above on CSAP Reading



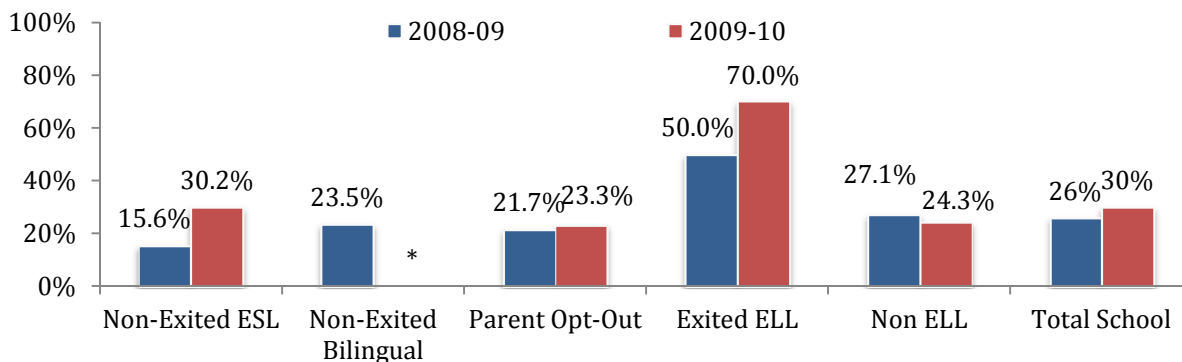
Source: DPS Department of English Language Acquisition, November 2010.

* Data not available

Note: Data only include the English version of the CSAP.

Sample Sizes: 2009 – Non-Exited ESL: N=45; Non-Exited Bilingual N=17; Parent Opt-Out N=23; Exited ELL N=20; Non ELL N=83; 2010 – Non-Exited ESL: N=63; Parent Opt-Out N=30; Exited ELL N=20; Non ELL N=74

Percentage of ELL Students Who were Proficient or Above on CSAP Writing



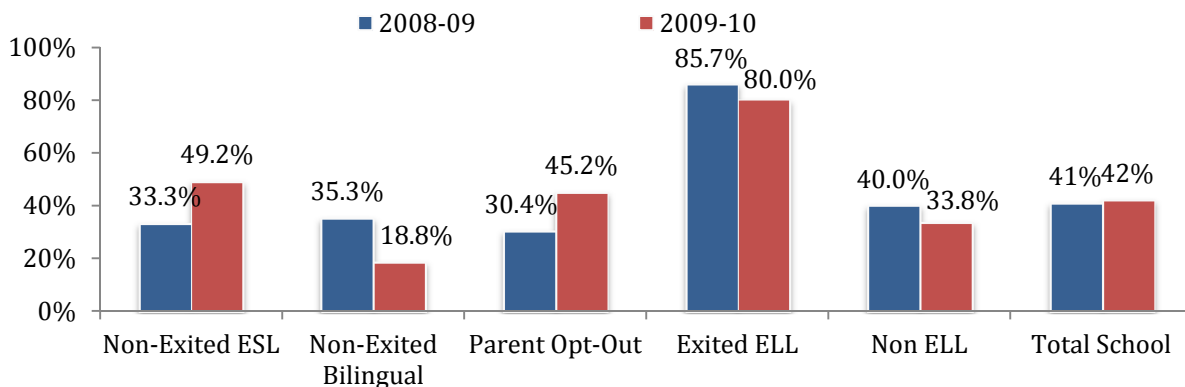
Source: DPS Department of English Language Acquisition, November 2010.

* Data not available

Note: Data only include the English version of the CSAP.

Sample Sizes: 2009 – Non-Exited ESL: N=45; Non-Exited Bilingual N=17; Parent Opt-Out N=23; Exited ELL N=20; Non ELL N=85; 2010 – Non-Exited ESL: N=63; Parent Opt-Out N=30; Exited ELL N=20; Non ELL N=74

Percentage of ELL Students Who were Proficient or Above on CSAP Math



Source: DPS Department of English Language Acquisition, November 2010.

* Data not available

Note: Data only include the English version of the CSAP.

Sample Sizes: 2009 – Non-Exited ESL: N=45; Non-Exited Bilingual N=51; Parent Opt-Out N=23; Exited ELL N=21; Non ELL N=85; 2010 – Non-Exited ESL: N=63; Non-Exited Bilingual 32; Parent Opt-Out N=31; Exited ELL N=20; Non ELL N=74

Summary of Findings from Case Study

School-wide practices that support the success of learners of English as a second language at Force:

- Force views itself as a community school, involving community and all parents including those who do not speak English in the school
- Force exhibits strong principal leadership
- Force has a strong, committed staff
- A culture of collaboration has been established at Force
- There is an emphasis on properly placing students for language acquisition, as well as adjusting student placements as necessary at Force; focus is placed on “getting it right” in the early grades so that they’re prepared to move forward
- Data, including formative and summative assessment of content and language, are strongly valued and used to make decisions about ELL students at Force
- ELA-S teachers and some additional teachers have embraced components of Literacy Squared
- Force has developed a strong language and print-rich environment that emphasizes academic language and bi-literacy

Community School

Force is a school committed to helping both students and their families. “We have a very community school model,” the principal states. Mobility is not huge at Force, “We have a fairly consistent population...generations of families have come here.” The school emphasizes to parents that having their child at school every day is important. A Spanish-speaking secretary makes calls each day to parents of students who are absent. Force has a Beacon Neighborhood Center program that offers after-school enrichment that is both academic and socio-emotional to about a quarter of the school’s students. The school partners with Catholic Charities and with nurses from Regis to support parents’ needs for social services. The school also has a 21st Century Learning Grant. Many activities are held for families: literacy nights, math nights, science nights, movie nights, health nights, open house, and parent-teacher conferences. Information in the school’s front foyer urges parents to take advantage of transportation to the local library two times per week. There is an active PAC (parent action committee) that raises money that goes to the school. The teachers that we interviewed report that the kids at Force are “great.” They have “manners” and are “here to learn. The parents are great, too.” The teachers report that the parents are starting to be very active. The principal acknowledges and has been attempting to address diversity within the Mexican community. For example, efforts are being made this year to integrate transitioning ELA-S students with English-speaking students in specials classes in the primary grades to encourage language development. The school also works with the small number of Asian, African American, and Somali families whose children attend Force. When these children do not speak English, they

are placed in ELA-E classes, and if possible paraprofessionals who know these children's native languages help to translate and communicate. The principal states, "We seek out help to get our families what they need." The principal knows the students and their language and academic levels. Upon finishing at Force, many students enroll at West Denver Prep. Other students go to Kepner Middle School.

Strength of Personnel

Personnel that have remained at the school have embraced the community. The staff has remained cohesive during leadership transitions and sustained interest in self-development. The humanities coach has continued through many transitions and maintained the cause of bi-literacy with teachers; her consistency seems important. Six teachers, out of 22 teachers at the school, were trained in literacy-based ESL, have stayed at the school, and continue to use the strategies. This represents all of the ELA-S teachers plus the humanities coach. A particular example of the dedication of the teaching staff is the decision of nine teachers, the humanities coach and the assistant principal to voluntarily attend a week-long institute for school improvement, the Linda Dorn Comprehensive Model for School Reform, during the summer. In addition to supplemental professional development initiated by teachers, four interviewed teachers reported that DPS provided them with useful instructional strategies for ELL students. They felt that the Literacy Squared training that they had received was "amazing," and Literacy Squared was "a big reason we can move them [students] forward."

Currently, the principal and teachers realize that a problem the school has is the low scores and levels of students who are English only. They speculate that this may relate to their low socio-economic status. They see these students as having language needs similar to English language learners. They are starting to look at this issue more closely as part of their PDK on Academic Language.

Leadership

This is only the second year that the current principal has been at Force. Teachers state that she uses a style similar to the last, long-term principal. The previous principal was there for five years, followed by one year of interim leadership. Teachers report that the previous principal was businesslike, "knew where she wanted to go," and pursued changes in small steps so as not to make staff anxious. The movement to Literacy Squared was accomplished under her leadership. She was the person who hired the humanities coach, having worked with her in a previous district. Teachers reported that the current principal does not micro-manage and leaves placement and instructional decisions to them as long as formative assessment scores are progressing. The teachers seem to appreciate this. The principal said, "You have to have trust in your teachers. They're aware of what's going on. They're the first line of defense and they are really committed to understanding the child's language ability. That's the cooperation they all have."

The principal and the assistant principal came to the school at the same time. They had both been in the same cohort of a principal preparation program. The two of them do at least one formal

teacher observation each week and then five informal observations. They are more organized about doing these observations this year than last. They would like to do some observing together in order to be sure that they are normed. They always give some sort of feedback after observations: scribe, conference, e-mail, or quick conversation. They discuss what they are seeing in classrooms with the humanities coach who is doing classroom coaching with specific teachers who need support. From this work they plan the professional development sessions. The principal believes that they are working to change teachers' mindsets concerning "what the kids are capable of doing and their understanding of how to actually implement new strategies that would increase and deepen students' learning.

Collaboration "Culturally a very good school"

When the new principal came last year, both the principal and teachers had to collectively establish what "proficiency" meant in language and content with all teachers. Teachers are comfortable with identifying problems, taking action, and moving students when they struggle. There is collaborative differentiation that is both horizontal within grade levels and vertical across grade levels so that individual students' needs for repeated instruction or acceleration can be met. In our interview, four teachers stated that teachers work together well as vertical teams and inside grade levels. They felt that placement had been more strategic for the past two years with collaboration of the ELA-S and ELA-E teachers.

The humanities coach reports that over time teachers have developed the ability to collaborate and talk freely with one another in "accountable talk." Currently, in order to make use of a school-wide data wall (which covers one wall of a resource classroom) more collaborative, the humanities coach is asking teachers to use sticky notes to ask further questions or provide additional information about students' progress or lack thereof.

Placement, Invest Time Early for Good Placement for Language Acquisition

At this time, the principal reports that about 85% of the students have received some sort of ECE either at Force or through churches or daycare. She reports that her work has become very focused on ECE, kindergarten, and Grades 1 and 2. She sees two important reasons for this emphasis. First, this focus works to place children into the right classroom early on. Secretaries in the Force main office have been trained to use the DPS ELA video to help determine where a child might best be placed. One secretary in particular who is Spanish-speaking works with parents on the preferred placement forms and helps to define concepts for them. Parents don't always know or make the connection to the language of instruction when they fill out the forms. She has learned that she needs to ask key questions of the child such as: Did your last teacher talk to you in Spanish? Did you read in Spanish? She knows questions to ask the families. Students are also tested with both the EDL and the DRA (student literacy assessments). If a child seems to be misplaced, then the secretary will call the parent and help the parent understand what teachers would recommend as best for

their child. The principal stated that placement is easier when students are coming from Mexico than when they are coming from other districts.

A second reason for the principal's focus at these levels is because she realizes that the proficiency standards in ECE, K, 1, and 2 have to be much higher. If the school has students who are far behind grade level especially in 4th and 5th grades, there needs to be more emphasis on getting ready for 3rd grade. She believes that rigor and getting students on track early is essential. It does not matter whether the language is English or Spanish; the notion of getting on grade level by 3rd grade in either language is important. The principal asserts, "If they are not, the work is so much harder. It's a true RTI model – that's why the interventions are there."

Data, Formative & Summative Assessment of Content and Language

The principal, humanities coach, and teachers consistently use data from formative and summative assessments in frequent data team meetings. The school maintains and discusses a large chart or "data wall" displayed in a resource classroom. This "data wall" is captured in the digital pictures and its use was subsequently explained by the humanities coach. The school uses CELA, ELA, and DRA data. The principal believes that it would help the school to have an oral language indicator for all students, not just English language learners, especially in the early grades. The principal and teachers actively use CELA data, finding it useful when coupled with content proficiency data. The principal sees that for this school the CELA scores match well to future CSAP scores.

The principal stated that "a year's growth isn't enough." She also stated that, "We *can* grow the kids." More specifically, the principal states, "What our work has shown us this year, we still have a lot of kids who are proficient/partially proficient, but looking at interim data, we're in that 30% range. Are we set for the kids we have or where we need for them to be? If all was working, we would be where we need to be at interim....If we don't grow 14%, we won't meet CSAP. Formative assessment, we are beginning that conversation. How does the conversation about rigor and academic language support that." Students are grouped and regrouped both horizontally and vertically for literacy instruction, i.e., collaborative differentiation. Teachers have started in the upper elementary grades to introduce data walls in classrooms around fluency and comprehension. The idea is not to introduce competition and stress, but rather, to work as a class to increase and encourage lower performing students.

Interventions at the school are as follows. Kindergarten: K-Pals; 1st-3rd Grade: Reading Recovery in Spanish and English; LLI in English; Foundations (Wilson) more for Special Education and one class of 1st grade students because they were very low this year; Read Naturally, Voyager. For the most part, students are transitioned to English in 3rd grade starting mid-year. Speaking to the importance of adapting to their population of student, the principal reports, "If the ELA department says that we have to do something, we certainly do it. But if we have leeway, we take it."

ELA-S and Some Additional Teachers Have Embraced Components of Literacy Squared

Approximately, seven years ago, the then principal (different than the current principal), teachers, and current humanities coach decided to be part of Literacy Squared, a project by the BUENO Center at University of Colorado Boulder that encourages students' development of bi-literacy. This research-based project promotes literacy-based ESL earlier and for more time. It also promotes the use of Spanish for a longer time. Last year, the school no longer had the money necessary to be a formal part of the project. However, teachers had experienced enough success with the project that they have continued to use several of its elements. The new principal also familiarized herself with the project and has embraced it. Elements of the project, in addition to the district-approved Avenues program, include use of co-constructed texts in native language, use of workshop approaches for reading and writing, meta-linguistic discussion of writing, Dictado (where students on alternating weeks listen and write according to a text dictated in English or Spanish—this technique does not use translation—and then they self-correct, i.e., comma use, capitalization of proper nouns, grammar, or spelling of content-based academic language, two-way translation and comparison of languages). *Asi se dice*, which is another Literacy Squared activity, did not receive as much exposure and was tried by teachers who wanted to see how it worked in their classrooms. During the years the school was formally part of Literacy Squared, teachers adhered to exact times for instruction in Spanish and English. Now teachers do this more informally, but still discuss in team meetings the amounts of time for instruction in each language. The school plans to do a more formal study of the strategies that teachers are still using soon. The principal has supported native language transition by ensuring that the kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade ELA-S teachers are all native Spanish speakers. An additional teacher was hired to teach in an English classroom and then moved to an ELA-S classroom when the school needed an additional 1st grade ELA-S teacher. The principal noted that these teachers bring aspects of their experiences of learning and teaching in another country to their teaching so that comparisons of regional language variations and instructional methods from various countries can be made.

There is ongoing evaluation of students' language needs, individually and by program design. The focus is on language development: "How are students communicating?" Transition to reading and writing in English begins when students enter the school, but more formally in 3rd or 4th grade. This varies with the student. Grouping and transitioning is based upon EDL, CELA, DRA, and CSAP scores. Teachers explained how EDL, CELA, DRA, and CSAP data were used to help make decisions about regrouping and interventions students needed as well as when they were ready to transition into English. Students are regrouped frequently for literacy so that they are working where their literacy growth can best be supported. By 5th grade all of the instruction is in English. This teacher is Spanish-speaking and can support students using Spanish, but the curriculum is all in English. Bilingualism is celebrated in the school.

Currently, there is ongoing discussion concerning what literacy-based ESL strategies teachers will continue to use. For example, the teachers feel that just because they are no longer a formal Literacy Squared School, they should not abandon the more than 45 minutes of English language

Instruction that students were getting under the model. The third grade ELA-S teacher felt that since they were no longer in Literacy Squared that without the total focus, she was working harder at the balance of Spanish and English and transition to English.

Language and Print-Rich Environment

The emphasis placed upon language and literacy development is apparent from the photographic inventory taken at Force. Signs in the halls are in both Spanish and English. The rooms are well equipped with class libraries in the early intermediate grades, which include both English and Spanish books. Materials and centers are thoughtfully and invitingly designed. All classrooms have means for projecting text. Use of technology is integrated into the curriculum particularly starting in 4th grade. The pictures show emphasis being placed on systematic content language and literacy beginning in the early grades with more emphasis in these areas starting in 4th grade. Science experiments, pictures, and other objects in the classrooms suggest the use of realia to encourage language development. The school library supports learning in both Spanish and English. It also contains materials that support content area learning. Grade levels make use of word walls and have magnetic blocks of letters to emphasize phonetic and spelling patterns. Classrooms that were photographed contain classroom libraries with a balance of books in Spanish and English. A variety of genre is apparent as well as a balance of both narrative and expository text. Teacher-made posters in the rooms emphasize metalinguistic strategies that good readers and writers use.

The teachers that we interviewed were very positive about the DPS literacy guide and the tons of resources that they could pull from. They felt that they never lacked for resources in either language. They felt that the planning guides allowed them to all be in about the same place and to have consistency that was good for students. Students learned routines in one grade level that they could use the following year.