



# Friday Focus

## Greenup County Schools

### Closing the Achievement Gap

The Kentucky Department of Education defines the Achievement Gap as a substantive performance difference on each of the tested areas by grade level of the state assessment program between various groups of students including male and female, with and without disabilities, students with and without English proficiency, minority and nonminority, and students who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and those who are not eligible for free/reduced lunch. (KRS 158.649)

According to Steven Covey the author and founder of the Leader In Me Program, studies have identified a significant “skills gap” between what students are currently being taught and the skills employers are seeking in today’s global economy. This means we must approach education differently than we have in the past. We must take on the challenge of reaching all students via engaging lessons with a real world application approach to learning .

In addition to being equipped with implementation of project based learning, technology integration, and multiple learning style considerations, teachers must practice strategies that encourage a growth mindset for goal setting. Studies show that goal setting can be one of the most powerful tools to increased student achievement.

Although goal setting and having a growth mindset are examples of plans to reduce the achievement gap, nothing can compare to quality instruction. A student scoring at the 50 percentile who spends two years in an average school with an average teacher is likely to continue scoring at the 50th achievement percentile. That same student having spent two years in a “most effective” school with a “most effective” teacher, rockets to the 96th achievement percentile.

The converse also

holds true : if this same student spends two years in a “least effective” school with a “least effective teacher, that student’s achievement level plunges to the third percentile. Yet another reason that engagement strategies, effective instruction, differentiation and RTI tiered interventions are all keys to closing the achievement gap.



### Strategies to Bridge the Gap

Rick Lavoie is a popular author and speaker about learning disabilities. He often shares strategies with schools about how to meet the needs of the struggling or reluctant student. As part of this publication we plan to share some of his (and others’) ideas for increasing student achievement for all learners. Each week you will see tips for closing the gap in our “Bridge the Gap” section. Below are few tips he suggests.

- ⇒ The teacher must become a “talent scout”. Attempt to determine specific interests hobbies or strengths of even the most withdrawn child. This can be accomplished via discussions, interviews or surveys. Once you have identified the child’s strengths, celebrate it in a very public manner.
- ⇒ Avoid using sarcasm with kids. Children with language problems often misinterpret it. When discussing an issue or a problem, avoid bringing up past difficulties which could lead to negativity or embarrassment.
- ⇒ Divide large tasks into smaller manageable ones. This will ensure success, mastery, and retention of skills. It can also reinforce goal setting by showing that goals are attainable.

January 16, 2015  
Volume 1, Issue 2

#### Upcoming Academy Dates:

TechSpert- 1/ 20 Eve.

MS Math- 1/21 Eve.

Grades 2-3 -1/22

Science Network- 1/23

#### Inside this issue:

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[Close the Achievement Gap one Student at a time](#)

[Annotated Reading Strategy](#)

[RTI Mathematics Support Links by Standard](#)

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