

Redesigning High Schools for the 21st Century

Increasing Access to Postsecondary Success: the Advancement Via Individual **Determination (AVID) Program**

By: Sally Wherry and Jessica Espinosa, Center for Postsecondary Success, Minnesota Department of Education

We know we cannot wait until our students are in high school to ensure they are college and career ready. Governor Dayton's 7 Point Plan has targeted "Raising the Bar-Closing the Gap", to underscore the importance of preparing all Minnesota students for a successful future. View 7 Point Plan. In order to reach this critical goal, it is imperative for us to build a stronger bridge between middle school and high school and to provide programs and supports to increase student awareness, access and achievement in rigorous courses.

Minnesota's efforts to increase student enrollment and success in rigorous courses are having a positive impact. In the last five years, student participation in dual credit programs (programs and courses that allow high school students to earn both high school and college level credit) is increasing, while overall public high school enrollment is decreasing. View Progress and Possibilities report. At the same time, participation by students of color in these programs is increasing more rapidly than that of the overall population, and participation of low income students is increasing more rapidly than is participation by the overall population in some, but not all, forms of dual credit.

Additionally, programs that are specifically designed to increase the awareness, expectations, support and achievement for all students are having a positive impact in Minnesota. In order to prepare students for the challenges of postsecondary education, we need to not only provide rigorous content, but also help students develop the academic habits of mind to apply this knowledge. One of the programs designed to do this is Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID). View AVID website. AVID was initially implemented in Minnesota in two districts in 2005; seven years later it has expanded to serve 34 districts, 24 elementary sites, and 93 secondary sites. Although AVID may serve all students, it targets the least served students in the academic middle. At the middle and high school level, AVID students enroll in rigorous courses and also receive support in an elective AVID class. The AVID class, taught by a trained teacher, focuses on the planning, writing, inquiry, reading and collaboration skills required for postsecondary success.

Minnesota is making progress in closing the achievement gap, but there's still a great deal of work to be done. An MDE initiative, launched in 2010-2011, is providing Minnesota eighth graders with information regarding college and career readiness in order to encourage more rigorous course-taking in high school, especially for students in underrepresented groups. This project provides information to students and parents in a variety of ways. To request information Email Your Choice Your Future. Request information Additionally, a framework of tools, resources, strategies and WebEx presentations related to the research-based core components of preparing students for postsecondary success has been developed for middle school educators. To request a copy of the report, Email Angie Johnson.

What is your school/district doing to increase awareness of, access to, and success in rigorous courses? Let us know! Email Sally Wherry and email Jessica Espinosa.



Designer Showcase

AVID: The Road to Implementation in St. Paul

By: Dr. Darlene Frye, Assistant Director- Office of College and Career Readiness, St. Paul Public Schools

In the summer of 2005 Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) staff began the implementation of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) as one of two districts, Brooklyn Center the other, in the State of Minnesota. This journey into new territory in college and career readiness for historically underserved students has been one filled with joys, potholes, failures and successful outcomes.

With 473 students in grades 7 and 10, the AVID program began at seven SPPS sites, three middle and four high schools. The first pothole came while staff was still in training. The students had heard about the program and considered it to be remedial, not a good way to begin the recruitment process. Through honest and open dialogue at family meetings, this pothole was patched quickly, as students and families heard about the requirement for students in the program to take at least one advanced class each marking period. Some students swung to the opposite stance of the program, not being for them, as being in advanced classes was not for them.

The next detour of the journey was in tutor recruitment. In a state that had not heard of AVID at any level, to find college students who could complete 16 hours of training and be available to tutor in the AVID classes twice a week was extremely difficult. With the assistance of a volunteer consultant to make introductions at Twin City post-secondary institutions, the AVID informational road show began. Partnerships began with the largest support coming from Macalester College's Office of Civic Engagement. We began a partnership that developed into a pipeline of well-seasoned tutors.

So now to the joys over the past few years. Initially, we saw that AVID students seemed to increase their attendance; in looking at the data it was true. AVID students' attendance was higher than their grade level peers by 5%-8% at each site. As for being in what some thought was a remedial program, students were maintaining in their advanced courses. And lastly, many students began to feel that their AVID class was more than a class, it was an additional family where they felt they belonged. AVID shirts became a badge of honor because this group had done something different, shown up to school everyday, taken harder courses, carried a large 3" binder, taken Cornell notes, and found that they were advanced class material and future college students.

The first SPPS AVID class had a 100% graduation rate. While two years of AVID cannot take the credit for this success, most of these students graduated with 2-6 advanced courses on their transcripts. When asked, almost all of the students stated that had it not been for the AVID requirement, tutorial support, and their elective teacher's encouragement, they would not have tried advanced courses. Since that first AVID class, the program graduation rate has been between 96%-99%, but with each class the number of advanced courses the students take has increased. AVID students now graduate with 6-10 advanced courses on their transcripts.

With the successes we have experienced in SPPS through AVID at the secondary level, we began implementing the AVID College Readiness System, which includes the elementary level of academic success skills in grades 4-6 with over 4,000 students. This implementation has had its own path of learning curves. Yet with our first large wave of AVID elementary students set to enter 7th grade in the fall, we hope to see their successes in completing the middle school requirements without credit losses, or need for intervention supports.



Measuring Up

2010-2011 AVID Minnesota Senior Data Collection

2010-2011 Data Collection	Percentage of 248 Minnesota Seniors
Ethnicity	
African-American	37.7
American Indian	2.0
Hispanic	17.2
Asian	15.4
Caucasian	27.1
Multiracial	0.7
Gender	
Male	45.0
Female	55.0
Low Income	66.7
Minnesota AVID Seniors	
Graduated	97.6
Accepted to a four-year college	82.2
Plan to attend a four-year college	72.7
Plan to attend a two-year college	23.1

^{*}Source: Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID).

High School Toolbox – Strategies and Resources

Minnesota Learning Commons (MnLC) introduces a new feature of the MnLC blog - Online Learning & Technology News, Week in Review. This feature provides weekly update with news, articles, discussions, opinions, conferences, etc., within the world of online learning. Visit MnLC website.

<u>View Establishing a Statewide Plan to Ensure Rigorous Course Taking for Minnesota Students</u>. A Minnesota P-20 report providing recommendations on how to increase student access and success in rigorous courses.

The Future Ready Project resource center, launched by Achieve, helps create an environment that supports the college- and career-ready agenda and sets high expectations for all students.

<u>View Future Ready Project</u> (www.futurereadyproject.org),

"Elements of a Successful High School" by Alliance for Excellent Education informs how to help all young people graduate with high-level knowledge and skills. <u>View Elements of a Successful High School</u> (http://www.all4ed.org/what_you_can_do/successful_high_school).



Help Desk

Parent Involvement and Extended Learning Activities in School Improvement Plans in the Midwest Region report is an analysis of effective parent involvement activities in the school improvement plans in five states. This report is prepared for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) by the Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest. View Midwest Region Report.

<u>View Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do</u>, an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) practice guide on effective practices that prepare students academically for college.

Progress and Possibilities: Trends in Public High School Student Participation with Minnesota's Dual Credit Programs 2006-2011. <u>Visit the Center for School Change</u> to review the Executive Summary of Minnesota dual credit courses and discussion of how to encourage student participation.



On the Drawing Board - Calendar of Events

Events sponsored by MDE, unless otherwise noted

International Baccalaurate (IB) Orientation Seminar (Roseville) February 3, 2012

Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs Conference (Rochester) **February 15-17, 2012**

Minnesota ACT Conference (Minneapolis) **February 17, 2012**

MN K-12 Online Learning Alliance conference

(St. Paul) March 16, 2012