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# An Evaluation Of AVID As A Supplemental Education Program At The Middle School Level

Lori Bradner

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AN EVALUATION OF AVID AS A SUPPLEMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AT  
THE MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

Lori Beth Bradner

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

December, 2017

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This document is organized to meet the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement with a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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## **ABSTRACT**

This is a study of AVID as a supplemental education program at the middle school level that includes a quantitative evaluation of the academic efficacy of AVID utilizing anonymized, longitudinal student achievement data. The second section is a qualitative evaluation of the AVID program at one middle school within a district to determine the perceived efficacy of the AVID program among stakeholders using surveys and interviews. This also includes a discussion of the necessary change in leadership determined by the evaluation portions of this project. The third portion outlines a policy change essential for satisfactory outcome as defined by AVID national criteria for the middle school to move from a Highly Certified Site to Demonstration School status.

## **PREFACE**

I currently serve as an AVID Coordinator and AVID Academic Teacher in the Alpha Bravo Public School District (ABPS). I specifically targeted DE Middle School (DEMS) as my place of employment given it's A grade and 5 Star school status for over 14 years. My purpose was to gain a position on the faculty in order that my children would have the opportunity to matriculate through DE Middle School and move on to its feeder high school within the same area, which has a stellar reputation in the state.

Fortunately, I was hired during the summer of 2016 to help revitalize an already existing AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School. The district maintains one of the largest AVID contracts in the nation and recently implemented the program in over 20 elementary schools throughout the county. AVID was implemented at DE Middle School 4 years prior to my hire by the choice of the district. At the inception of the program at DE Middle School, AVID was extremely well received by all the stakeholders in the community. The initial AVID Coordinator implemented the program with fidelity and authenticity. She was able to build relationships that helped establish trust and support of the supplemental education program. With her guidance, the school was able to attain Highly Certified Site status from AVID National. Unfortunately, she was soon tapped to move into administration and left DE Middle to further pursue her career as an Assistant Principal at another school. After she left, the program faltered and suffered to what the stakeholders referred to as "the revolving door of AVID teachers." Trust and support of the program began to dwindle. Upon my hire, I was tasked with revitalizing the program and moving the certification status to the next level.

This evaluation project helped me to explore the efficacy of AVID as a supplemental education program at the middle school level from both a quantitative and qualitative perspective. Such studies at this level have not been conducted to date. The efficacy of AVID is documented at the high school and even community college level, but little research has been done at the middle school level as I discovered through an extensive literature review. The first portion of this project allowed me to compare quantitative data provided by the district and qualitative data in the form of surveys and interviews from DE Middle School to AVID's actual mission statement. The second portion of my study was focused on the components of the change in leadership and the development of short, mid, and long-term range goals for DE Middle School. As the new AVID Coordinator and AVID Academic Teacher, I was forced to redefine the vision and mission of the program while regaining the trust of all the stakeholders. The third portion of this evaluation was written to assist in the development of a new policy at DE Middle School regarding the implementation of AVID as a full year course for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Currently, the AVID program only serves 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at DE Middle School. With the onboarding of the elementary schools in the district, it is essential for DE Middle School to prepare for the incoming students who have already been exposed to the curriculum in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades.

The process and journey of this study has led me to the conclusion that I am a transitional, servant leader. Transitional leaders inspire people to reach for the seemingly impossible through support, encouragement, coaching, and recognition. Transitional leadership is positive and lends itself to a growth mindset. It is sustainable for the long

term. As a transitional leader, I am focused on the other leaders with whom I work, the followers, the context, and the outcome.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is no doubt the process of birthing this dissertation can be considered the zenith of my academic career. Undertaking the journey, while arduous at times, led me through educational theories, concepts, and self-discoveries that would not have been possible through any other means. Sir Isaac Newton once quoted, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” I am forever grateful to a number of people who have bared my weight throughout this expedition and have led me to the realization of this seemingly impossible finale. I would first like to thank my advisor, mentor, and dissertation chair, Dr. Carol Burg. You were there from the beginning as the living embodiment of Jon Krakauer’s words, “Getting to the top of any mountain (is) considered much less important than how one (gets) there: prestige (is) earned by tackling the most unforgiving routes with minimal equipment, in the boldest style imaginable.” Dr. Burg, I could not have done it without you. Thank you for guiding me to the pinnacles of my Everest. I hope our journey will continue as colleagues and friends. I would also like to thank Claire Mawhinney and Cecil McClellan for their inspiration and consistently modeling the true meaning of servant leadership. I can only hope to be one tenth of the administrators, leaders, and managers you are today. Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Dr. C. Hall “Skip” Jones who supported me and encouraged me to believe in my own abilities. Thank you for giving me wings to soar. Each of these individuals directed me through a myriad of situations, allowing me to reach this peak. Each of you gave me the courage and provided me with the emotional and moral support I needed to successfully complete this journey. I am forever grateful.

## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this journey and final work to my four children, Franchesca Renae, Erica Grace, Jacob Martin, and Nicholas Marshall. The greatest title I will ever hold is that of “Mommy.” In the words of Noel Coward, “Your quality is to me unique, and your magic imperishable.” Never be afraid to color outside the lines, muster the courage to think outside the box, and always remember to savor the magic of snow on Christmas. The four of you are, and will be, forevermore, my most splendid masterpieces. You are my legacies for this world. I leave you with a little “main man poetry” from one of my favorite poets, Shel Silverstein.

Listen to the MUSTN'TS, child,

Listen to the DON'TS.

Listen to the SHOULDN'TS,

The IMPOSSIBLES, the WON'TS.

Listen to the NEVER HAVES,

Then listen close to me.

ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN, child,

ANYTHING CAN BE.

I love you, Franchesca, Erica, Jacob and Nicky, beyond the sun, around the moon, through the stars and back, again and again and again...May all your dreams become your reality. I believe in you! Love, Mommy

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## **SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION**

In August 2016, Alpha Bravo Public School District (ABPS) hired me to serve as the AVID Coordinator and Instructor for Delta Echo Middle School (DEMS). AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination and focuses on closing learning gaps and preparing students to attend college. The AVID program at DEMS has been active for four years and the school currently holds a second-degree certification. To date, the efficacy of the program at this middle school has yet to be analyzed. The initial goal of this project was to evaluate the past four years of standardized testing data using the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA) and compare the results with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students not enrolled in AVID. The guidelines and national averages determined by the standardized tests served as the standard of measure. Once the evaluation is complete, the goal will be to create a plan to enhance and advance the supplemental educational program, AVID, at DEMS to move toward becoming an AVID Center School of Distinction and Demonstration School in Alpha Bravo Public School District (ABPS).

Given that AVID is offered as an elective to all students, including students with IEP's (Individual Education Plans) and 504 Plans, I aggregated the AVID student data from the DEMS data and compared the FSA scores between the AVID students and those students not enrolled in the AVID courses. The results from the AVID and non-AVID students was tracked over the 4-year period to determine improvement.

I utilized voluntary, anonymous surveys distributed to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty at DEMS and school Administration to determine the past and present perceptions regarding the efficacy of the AVID program at the school. The survey included questions

to identify areas of weakness in the current program and suggestions for improvement that will help establish a 5-year plan with the goal of becoming an AVID School of Distinction and Demonstration school in ABPS District. In addition, I conducted voluntary interviews with the principal, three assistant principals, five 7th and 8th grade faculty members, and two guidance counselors to create an accurate picture of the past, present, and future of the AVID Program at DEMS.

AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. It is a program that started as pedagogy to bridge the learning gap among low-income students at Clairemont High School in San Diego, California. Mary Swanson founded the program and served as a teacher at the school. Since 1970, she taught English at the school since 1970, and in 1977, after starting “Project English” and completing her master’s thesis, Ms. Swanson identified the key components that became the foundation of AVID as it is currently known. AVID is considered a practice, pedagogy, and philosophy that includes a practical, research-based curriculum to meet the needs of individual students. The supplemental educational program is designed to prepare students for success in secondary and post-secondary education with a special emphasis on those who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

### **AVID Program Description and Certification**

Regardless of school level (elementary, middle, high school or postsecondary community college) the implementation of an AVID program, the student selection process, the certification process, and the essentials of the AVID program remain the same for all students. In their 2008 article, Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle support Mary Swanson’s original initiative and define AVID as an educational reform



program to help increase the matriculation of underrepresented populations to 4-year colleges. Hubbard and Mehan (1999) further support Swanson's original initiative by illustrating AVID's role in making advanced courses in middle and high schools more accessible to the same underrepresented and disadvantaged populations. The program emphasizes untracking middle achieving students and placing them in the same college preparatory classes as their highly achieving peers while providing academic support to increase the likelihood of success in those classes (Gandara, Larson, Rumberger, & Mehan, 1998; Hubbard & Mehan, 1999; Watt, Huerta, & Cossio, 2004).

AVID is currently offered at the elementary, middle and high school levels in ABPS District. AVID uses a unified, national certification process to maintain fidelity through the implementation of its various levels of programs. This certification process includes an individual evaluation of each school as well as a district wide evaluation. The evaluation process includes a three-level continuum of implementation: Level 1- Meets Certification Standards, Level 2-Routine Use, and Level 3- Institutionalized Use. Currently, AVID is changing the evaluation system by which it will assess schools and districts involved in the program. AVID Center will be introducing the certification evaluation changes in the next 12 months. Peak (2010) believes to retain the high caliber and quality of the AVID program, AVID Center requires that schools must receive certification from the local area agency for implementing the AVID program essentials. According to Advancement Via Individual Determination (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002a), these essentials are listed below and are the key elements for school certification.

1. AVID student selection focuses on students in the middle (2.0-3.5 GPA's as one indicator) with academic potential who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin college preparation.
2. AVID program participants, both students and staff, must choose to participate.
3. The school must be committed to the full implementation of the AVID program, with the AVID elective class available within the regular academic school day.
4. AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet requirements for university enrollment.
5. A strong, relevant writing curriculum provides a basis for instruction in the AVID elective class.
6. Inquiry is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID elective class.
7. Collaboration is used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.
8. A sufficient number of tutors are available in the AVID class to facilitate students' access to rigorous curriculum.
9. AVID program implementation and student progress are monitored through the AVID Data System and results are analyzed to ensure success.
10. The school or district has identified resources for the program costs, has agreed to implement AVID Certification, and has committed to ongoing participation in AVID staff development.
11. An active interdisciplinary site team that collaborates on issues of student access to and success in rigorous college preparatory classes.
12. AVID provides support for students to achieve in higher level mathematics.

13. AVID teachers participate in ongoing, high quality staff development through their regional coordinator workshops and the AVID Summer Institute.

14. The AVID site coordinator must be a seasoned, highly respected, and dedicated, senior teacher with specific knowledge and skills. The AVID coordinator must be an expert in college admissions, public relations, and other special areas. (p. 3-10)

The AVID site team, a small learning community, is composed of all stakeholders (i.e. students, faculty, AVID elective teachers, administrators, college tutors, counselors, administrators, and parents) who meet frequently to discuss how to improve the program and is ultimately responsible for getting the school certified.

Students who are involved in the AVID elective at the middle school level must maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher in all classes. These students attend the AVID class once a day as a voluntary elective. Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle (2008) highlight “the (AVID) elective class offers tutorials that promote (a) student collaboration and inquiry, (b) motivational days involving field trips to colleges and presentations by guest speakers, and (c) academic skills classes that focus on instruction in Cornell-style note-taking, test taking and study skills, assignment tracking and writing to learn” and they underscore the AVID curriculum that “strongly emphasizes writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading” (p. 117).

The AVID program in AB District, where the middle school in this study is located, encompasses 46 middle schools and 27 high schools. It is presented as a secondary elective course for students in the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The focus of the program is to promote college preparedness throughout the schools in the district. Ultimately, the goal of the AVID coordinators and instructors at each institution is to

teach learning and behavior skills which lead to academic success, provide intensive academic support via tutorials, create a positive peer group for students, and close the achievement gap to make college accessible to all students. Currently, the AVID Program in AB District is estimated to be impacting over 9000 secondary students. The data reported by Alpha Bravo District states that out of the 99.4% of secondary AVID students (AVID students participating at the high school level), 80% of graduating AVID seniors applied to a 4-year college or university. In addition, 60% of those that applied were actually accepted to the college or university of their choice.

Through data collection and a systematic evaluation program, Delta Echo Middle School, as part of the AVID Program in ABPS district, can earn one of 5 possible school ratings: *AVID non-Certified Site*, *AVID Certified Site*, *AVID Highly Certified Site*, *AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction*, or *AVID Demonstration Site*. I serve as the AVID Coordinator at Delta Echo Middle School (DEMS) located in Florida. DEMS is currently an AVID Highly Certified with Second Degree Certification. There is only one AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction and AVID Demonstration Site located in AB District, namely, Foxtrot Golf Middle School (FGMS). Based on the Data and Evaluation Summary Document published in 2013 (citation omitted to ensure confidentiality), there are eleven essential nationwide standards that middle and high schools must meet to determine site certification. They are as follows:

1. AVID Student selection focuses on students in the middle with academic potential (2.0-3.5 GPA) who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin college preparation.
2. AVID participants (students and staff) must choose to participate.

3. The school must be committed to full implementation of AVID, with the AVID Elective available within the regular academic school day.
4. AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet the requirements for university acceptance.
5. Organization is used to promote academic self-management.
6. A strong, relevant writing and reading curriculum provides a basis for instruction in the AVID Elective class.
7. Inquiry and collaboration are used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.
8. A sufficient number of trained tutors must be available in the AVID class to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum. Tutors should be students from colleges and universities, and they must be trained to implement the methodologies used in AVID.
9. AVID implementation and student progress must be monitored through the AVID Data System, and results must be analyzed to ensure success.
10. The school or district must identify resources for AVID costs, agree to implement the AVID Essentials and to participate in AVID Certification and commit to ongoing participation in AVID professional learning.
11. An active, interdisciplinary Site Team collaborates on issues of students' access to and success in rigorous college preparatory classes.

Using these eleven essential criteria, the 10-year goal of DEMS is to become an AVID Site of Distinction and National Demonstration School. As mentioned above,

FGMS is currently the only school that has met the AVID national criteria to earn the honored Demonstration School title in ABPS district.

### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the status of the supplemental education program AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) at Delta Echo Middle School and determine the steps necessary to move the program from Secondary Certification to School of Distinction Status. Delta Echo Middle School was opened in 2000. DEMS has earned an “A” grade for 14 consecutive years and remains ranked within the top schools in the state of Florida and the nation. Since 2004, DEMS has earned the Florida Department of Education’s 5 Star School Award. Currently, the school serves 1,406 students in the following demographic approximate percentages: 4% Asian, 3% Black, 12% Hispanic, 0.5% Indian, 6% Multiracial, and 74% White.

Due to district mandate, DEMS implemented the AVID Program 4 years ago. The program was implemented for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students following the nationally outlined curriculum and standards for AVID, which are outlined on AVID’s website. The curriculum and standards are divided into grade levels to ensure continuity nationally. AVID served and currently serves as a voluntary elective choice for all 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at DEMS. I was hired as the AVID Program Coordinator and Instructor starting in the 2016-2017 school year. As the Coordinator for DEMS, I was tasked with evaluating and growing the program in order to become a Demonstrations School and eventual School of Distinction in the AB District in the next 5 years. During the initial introduction of the program, there was widespread support of the 11 essential elements used to create the program. Unfortunately, the program lost momentum and floundered. Even with

declining interest and support, DEMS was able to maintain their 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Certification for AVID, but the program appears to be stagnant at best. The purpose of this dissertation project, as stated above, is to determine why the AVID Program at DEMS has become stagnant while flourishing at Foxtrot Golf Middle School within the same district and to develop a course of action that will enable DEMS to earn the highest levels of certifications and become an AVID Center Demonstration School and National AVID School of Distinction.

It must be noted that there are very few studies focused on the efficacy of AVID at the middle school level and the academic impact the program has on middle school students. In 2011, the Chicago Public Schools ran a study to evaluate the impact of AVID on student learning. Data from over 14,000 ninth-graders was used for this study. The Consortium on Chicago School Research used surveys, interviews, and test data from the students and concluded that the AVID program had little to no effect or benefit for the students. Education Week published an article written by Sarah Sparks in 2011 that outlines the detail of that study. In comparison, Guthrie and Guthrie published an article in 2002 analyzing AVID at eight California high schools and determined through a collection of student data, interviews, and surveys that AVID was effective in providing support for students to succeed in higher level mathematics courses, and the teachers involved with AVID participated in ongoing, high level professional development as opposed to teachers not involved with AVID. AVID literature and the AVID Center website state that AVID is an effective program for closing the achievement gap (AVID Center, 2009-2016). This learning gap between the White population and minorities is of serious concern among education stakeholders, including administrators, teachers,

parents, and students. Implementing a research based, supplemental education program, namely AVID, that will yield increased academic achievement at a reasonable cost with proven results at the middle school level is the focus of this study.

### **Rationale**

I was hired by the AB District in July 2016 to serve as Delta Echo Middle School's AVID Coordinator and Facilitator. The past AVID instructor voluntarily left the position to make a lateral move to another school. In a voluntary interview conversation with the current principal at DEMS, the stagnation of the program is due in part to lack of administrative support for the program. Although she did not elaborate on the problems, she is 100% supportive of my current endeavors to rebuild the program.

The faculty opinion is mixed, as I determined through a short questionnaire I developed for our first Flap Jack Friday Introductory Site Team meeting held on August 19, 2016. The two exploratory questions were opinion based and asked what is working well with the AVID program at DEMS and what, if any, changes needed to be made. Out of 40 attendees, 23 of the surveys were returned. Interestingly, the responses I received did not answer the original questions but questioned the necessity of AVID at a school such as DEMS given the student body population. The perception among the current faculty is that DEMS does not need a supplemental education program to help the students succeed. DEMS is not considered a Title I school and the mean income of the geographic area surrounding the school is \$123,000. Students come from affluent families where, in most cases, one or both parents have advanced post-secondary degrees. The faculty have the perception that AVID is a grade recovery program to help failing



students. Very few students fall into this failing category at DEMS, so faculty see no need for a supplemental education program like AVID.

The School Improvement Plan identifies the school's early warning indicators that may lead to poor academic performance. One of the key indicators as identified by the school is Level 1 on the standardized Florida State Assessments (FSA). My research will contribute to the DEMS Improvement Plan by analyzing a correlation between the students enrolled in AVID and increased FSA scores as compared to those students not enrolled in the AVID program.

Guided by the new mission and vision, the superintendent and the school board also established a core set of values and four strategic priorities to ensure a clear and consistent pathway to achieving success. The four strategic priorities serve as the core of the 2015-2020 strategic plan: increase graduation rates, communicating with stakeholders, building strong culture, and relationships foundation of financial stewardship. In addition, the student learning objectives for the ABPS district include: graduation rates, student achievement, attendance, behavior, course performance, and digital learning.

The district has tasked each of the schools in the district to closely monitor leading indicators for graduation success and intervene when students' performance puts them at risk of not graduating. AB District expects 100% of its students to graduate. The key performance indicators for the district include: attendance, behavior, academic performance, on-time promotion, and success in English/Language Arts [ELA] and math. My research was designed to support the AB District's strategic plan by analyzing the

correlation between the academic achievements of the AVID students versus those students who are not enrolled in AVID.

AVID Center (2016) claims that it is an effective supplemental educational tool for increasing academic student achievement and closing the learning gap at the high school level. Literature also shows that AVID can be an effective predictor of students entering and finishing post-secondary education. The results of this research will be valuable to middle school stakeholders who want to implement AVID as an equally effective supplemental educational tool at the middle school level. Overall, this study served as an opportunity among education stakeholders to review and examine the efficacy of AVID at the middle school level as a supplemental education program to help increase cognitive outcomes such as student academic achievement on standardized exams and non-cognitive outcomes such as attendance and participation in more rigorous, challenging classes. Continuing research and the outcome of this study may also lead to the development of a new leadership plan at DEMS as we strive to become an AVID Center School of Distinction, and may also lead to new education policies for AB District to help support the long-term goals of the district.

AVID boasts a 35-year history and the AVID College Readiness System (ACRS) states that AVID students outperform peers on grade point averages, state mandated exams, and various other standardized exams as it is stated on the AVID.org website. The AVID program is available at 73 sites throughout AB District, including 46 middle and 27 high schools and 21 elementary schools as of 2017-2018 school year. Given the data collected to date does not support any statistically significant academic improvements for students who are enrolled in AVID programs across the nation and

given ABPS District's commitment to maintaining and supporting the program, the results of my research found some support for the AB District's Strategic Plan 2015-2020. In addition, the results of my research will, hopefully, support the DEMS School Improvement Plan by illustrating a direct correlation between increased academic performance and AVID participation compared to students who are not enrolled in the program at our school.

### **Goals**

The goal of this research study is to evaluate the status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School and determine the steps necessary to move the program from Secondary Certification to School of Distinction Status in the Alpha Bravo Public School District. The mission of AVID is the following: "At AVID, we seek to close the achievement gap by improving the performance of all students, especially those students who have not traditionally succeeded in completing college entrance requirements: students who are underrepresented in four year colleges and universities, students in the academic middle, students who are first in their family to go to college" (AVID Center, 2016, p. 22).

The goal expressed by the administration at DEMS is to move the students at DEMS who are considered in the academic middle identified as 2.0-3.0 GPA to a minimum of a 0.5-point increase to ensure admittance into more rigorous academic courses as they enter high school. DEMS aspires to grow the program to earn further district, state, and national recognition from AVID Center during the annual evaluations of the individual school programs. I have been hired to spearhead this endeavor. Based on the DEMS Improvement Plan established for the 2016-2017 school year, the mission

of the school is to “challenge all students to reach their highest academic potential” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). In addition, Delta Echo Middle School aims to be a leading middle school in academics for Alpha Bravo District.

### **Exploratory Questions**

My study began with four primary exploratory questions that guided my research:

Exploratory question 1. What do the participants and current stakeholders at DEMS (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors) report as working well in the current AVID program?

Exploratory question 2. To what degree do the stakeholders feel the AVID program contributes to the cognitive, academic outcomes (Florida Standardized Assessments in math and reading), as well as the non-cognitive outcomes of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at DEMS for those students in the AVID program as opposed to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students not enrolled in the AVID program?

Exploratory question 3. What do the participants and current stakeholders (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors) report as not working well in the program?

Exploratory question 4. To what degree do the stakeholders feel there are differences in academic outcomes based on the FSA (Florida Standardized Assessments) in math and reading for those 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders participating in AVID and those non-AVID students?

Exploratory question 5. What do the participants and current stakeholders (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors) report as greatest obstacles to maintaining and growing a successful AVID program with fidelity at DEMS?

Exploratory question 6. What ideas do the participants and current stakeholders (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors) recommend for improving the program at DEMS in order to achieve the goals established by the DEMS administration and ABPS District?

My secondary exploratory question includes data to determine the academic efficacy of AVID as a supplemental educational program at the middle school level. Secondary exploratory question: What effect, if any, was seen on those students' academic achievement outcomes as determined by FSA scores in math and reading provided by the State of Florida?

The null hypothesis for the primary exploratory question is that there is no statistically significant difference in academic achievement and outcomes for those 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students participating in the DEMS AVID middle school program when compared to those 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students not enrolled or participating in the DEMS AVID program.

In order to draw an accurate comparison and determine the efficacy of the program at our school, as the coordinator of the program at DEMS, the following assumptions must be noted: as a supplemental education program, AVID compliments the existing curriculum at DEMS through the use of tutorials; the DEMS AVID program also provides study strategies and teaches skills more effectively than is offered in regular core classes and focuses on the middle average students with a GPA of 2.0-3.5 to meet the national AVID center criteria for participation in the program. In addition, DEMS has an active site team comprised of 20 members who are dedicated to implementing the AVID program with fidelity. All 20 members have been trained at an AVID Summer

Institute, and the group is comprised of a variety of stakeholders including administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

### **Conclusion**

In section one, I provided key information necessary to define and clarify the topic of this dissertation and explain the contributions it may add to the field of education research. This section included the following: introduction, purpose of the evaluation, rationale and significance of the problem, goals, including hypothesis and assumptions. It is my hope this study will demonstrate the quantitative and qualitative efficacy of AVID as a supplemental educational program at the middle school level. As the new coordinator and leader of the program at DEMS, it is my intention to use the data to guide my leadership role to expand the program. The 5 and 10-year goals I have established as the new AVID Coordinator include a change of policy and an expansion of the program at DEMS to include incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This change in policy fits both the AB District's continuous improvement model and DEMS's School Improvement Plan. The next section is dedicated to a review of the literature, including discussions related to the achievement gap, middle school reform, and literature regarding the AVID program. In the next section, I will also provide the definition of terms for better understanding.

## **SECTION TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Introduction**

As mentioned in the introduction, the AVID Program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) was developed in 1980 by Mary Swanson. Mary Catherine Swanson was an English teacher in California and created the program to help her minority students become academically successful in higher level high school courses. It must be noted that her first class consisted of 30 students of which 28 continued to college (Mehan, Villanueva, & Lintz, 1992). Eventually, the AVID program expanded to include all of the high schools in Mary Swanson's school district. Currently, the AVID program is not only a national program, it is an international program (AVID Center, 2009). Currently, AVID can be found in over 5000 schools in almost every state in the nation, and it serves over 16 countries and over 400,000 students worldwide (AVID Center, 2009). It must be noted for this study that AB District holds one of the largest AVID contracts nationwide as quoted by the district officials. This contract includes high schools, middle schools, and several elementary schools that will be brought onboard during the 2017-2018 school year.

The AVID program is an elective program that targets students who are considered to be in the "academic middle" (AVID Center, 2006). Essentially, the target audience is students with average grades. AVID was not developed to be an academic recovery program to assist failing students. The goal of the program was, and is, to reach average students and encourage them to reach a higher academic achievement level to prepare them to go to the college of their choice. The overall goal is to help students create a path to higher education. This type of academic preparation is a key predictor of

educational success and college enrollment among high school age students (Perna, 2000).

The AVID program is an elective program providing students with academic support in writing, inquiry, collaboration strategies, organizational skills, and reading. AVID supports the core academic areas including mathematics, English Language Arts, reading, social studies, and science. According to the literature (Swanson, 2005), AVID is considered a transformational tool for improving entire school districts. In addition to the academic support, AVID provides professional development throughout the school year to support the AVID instructors and the site teams at each school. An example of this professional development is the AVID Summer Institutes conducted around the nation and used to help educators learn and support the integrity of the AVID program and principles while assisting schools in effective school-wide implementation of the program (Watt, Huerta, & Lozano 2007). Implementation is best defined by Fullan (2001) as “the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities and structures new to the people attempting or expected to change” (p. 65). AB District chose to implement the AVID program district-wide as a supplemental education program to help increase test scores and graduation rates, while providing best practices for writing, inquiry, organization, collaboration, and reading strategies to all educators in the district.

### **Supplemental Education Program Reform**

This study is focused specifically on the AVID program’s effectiveness at one middle school in ABPS District. The AVID program could easily be considered part of an educational transformative learning movement known as the Comprehensive School



Reform Demonstration (CSRSD) programs. This is also known as the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) program. Regarding this 1997 program, Pagano (2009) quoted the following in his dissertation: “The federal government created the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CRSD) program in 1997 as a means to restructure schools to promote changes in teaching and learning.... This comprehensive school-wide reform includes eleven provisions integral to effective change for schools” (p. 5). These provisions outlined in the CRSD program of 1997 focused on data driven, research-based curriculum design for the classroom and professional development. The goal of this program was to create strategies that could be used to improve academic student achievement and provide support for teachers and principals within the schools. The program called for community partnership and coordinated efforts by the schools to involve parents in the decision-making process as key stake holders. The program also included strategies for evaluation and increased use of technology in order to meet the needs of the diverse learners within the academic community (Epstein, 2008; Watt, Huerta, & Cossio, 2004; Desimone, 2002). According to Watt, Powell, Mendiola, and Cossio (2006), AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination is one of the supplemental educational programs and models of reform accepted by the federal government as part of the CSRSD effort to increase academic performance and provide greater rigor for students in the 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

Studying the efficacy of programs such as AVID is essential given the national focus on student achievement and the national and statewide testing requirements for all students that are used to measure individual schools, districts, teachers, and administrators. The allocation of federal monies is directly related to and based on the

results of these tests. Turner (2009) states that the enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (EESA) of 1965 expanded the use of achievement and standardized testing in the United States as a way to monitor the educational progress of all students. Support of standardized testing for all students continued and was further supported by the 1983 A Nation At Risk Report that called for an improvement in teaching through the use of higher academic benchmarks on all standardized examinations. With the enactment of No Child Left Behind, which requires all children in grades 3 through 8 to be tested annually using standardized assessments, middle school students are among the most tested school grade populations in our nation.

### **Achievement Gap**

Given this information, it is understandable why stakeholders are supportive and invested in implementing programs such as AVID to increase student achievement and promote higher education. In 2011, the George W. Bush Institute and the former first lady, Laura Bush, initiated a program called Middle School Matters at Stovall Middle School in the Aldine school district located in Houston, Texas. In support of this effort, the Associated Press published an article on [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com) supporting the research and Bush Institute initiatives that illustrate 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades are at a crucial time for determining future academic success. Laura Bush was quoted as saying, “We know from research that a lot of kids that drop out in high school really drop out in middle school” (George W. Bush Presidential Center, 2011).

In discussing student achievement, it is essential that the achievement gap be discussed. The mission of AVID is to not only help students succeed but to close the achievement gap. It is undisputable that a learning gap exists between minority students

and White students in this nation. Although there are many reasons for this gap, ranging from socio-economic to political, stakeholders from all areas of education agree that this gap exists (Wagner, 2015). In response to this gap, the the Obama administration developed and put forth a stimulus package known as Race To The Top. This initiative promised billions of dollars to be allocated toward educational reform in the form of a grant process for states willing to adhere to certain criteria and standards. McDonald (2010) explained the funding, “The Investment in Innovation Fund (i3) provides an additional \$650 million grant to support local efforts to start or expand research-based innovative programs that help close the achievement gap” (p. 48-49). Although this reform does not directly relate to AVID, the funding was used to support any supplemental education programs designed to help close the achievement gap and increase academic performance among students. AVID fits the standards and criteria outlined by the initiative. The achievement gap has become a national educational issue that continues to grow. Wagner (2015) and Murphy (2009) agree that, “achievement gaps have important consequences for both individuals and the nation. They damage the economic and social fabric of society, undermine civil rights and social justice for a large segment of the population, and destroy the principles of democracy” (Murphy, 2009, pg.10). The impact and ripple effect of academic achievement gaps impact the economic, social, and cultural aspects of our society. Unfortunately, Wagner claimed the academic achievement gap seems to be widening. Wagner supports his claim with case studies that illustrate how gaps in academic achievement often lead to fractionated communities, both politically and socially. This is a nationwide epidemic. Under the Obama administration, the Investment in Innovation Fund in 2010 hoped to provide the funds necessary to

supply schools with necessary resources to help underachieving students increase their academic performance.

This study focuses on AVID as a middle school program and its effect on a cross demographic of middle school students. The importance of focusing on AVID in the middle school is supported by Mickelson and Green (2006). In their article, they stated that the achievement gap between ethnically diverse students becomes more evident at the middle school level. As a current middle school teacher and having served in both high school and elementary schools in Florida, I would whole-heartedly agree that the gap for Black students' academic performance appears most evident in middle school (Davis & Jordan, 1994; Ford, 2010; Ford & Harris, 1992; Green, 2001). Given the age of adolescence that fills our current middle schools, it is no surprise that academic performance is often impacted by the emotional and social turbulence associated with this age bracket. According to Petzko (2004), "Early adolescence is filled with erratic growth spurts, immense variation in cognitive development, unpredictable emotions, and dominating social needs" (p. 8). Further research by Abramson (2004) stated that children in the middle grades are vastly different than those in elementary and their high school counterparts. Therefore, the restrictive rules that govern the elementary school students are not applicable to this age group. They are at a stage in development where they begin to ask why and require explanations when given instructions. Interestingly, Abramson also mentions that young people 11 to 15 years old are not yet ready for the less restrictive rules or freedoms granted to their high school counterparts. They are absolutely a population of students caught psychologically, developmentally, emotionally, and socially in the middle (Abramson, 2004).

The ever-changing social climate and emotional turbulence of the middle school years impact the students socially, emotionally, and physically. Manning and Allen (1987) indicate that these bio-psycho-social changes of adolescence play an important role on the academic performance of this middle school age group. Interestingly, Manning and Allen (1987) correlate these emotional, social, and physical changes in middle school age children as having a direct impact on the middle school culture and academic achievement.

Further studies by Gulino and Valetine (1999) indicate a direct correlation between a student's attitude and their academic performance due to the fragility of the adolescent mindset (Vatterott, 1991). I have witnessed this "fragile" state of the middle school students first hand and concur with the findings regarding the fragility and the link between their biopsychosocial well-being and academic performance. AVID, as a transformative educational program, seeks to address these issues and states, "Closing the achievement gap and preparing students for success in a global society are significant educational reform challenges that must be met now, particularly for low-income and minority students. Improving students' critical thinking, reading, and writing abilities allows them to participate and succeed in courses of high rigor and better prepares them for postsecondary access and success" (AVID Center, 2009). The national AVID curriculum was designed specifically to meet this challenge and help close the achievement gap among students.

### **Middle School Reform**

It must be mentioned at this point that it was not until 1910 that the idea of creating a school specifically for the middle grades became a reality. Two middle

schools, otherwise known as junior high schools, were opened in 1910 in California and Ohio (Jackson, 1986). These schools included students from grades 5 through 9. This initial education reform was met with some discontent and disillusionment and gave rise to a second middle level educational reform aptly called the middle school movement (McEwin, 1983). This movement led to the current model we now know as middle school, which includes students from 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

As mentioned above, this is one of the most challenging times physically, socially, psychologically, and academically for students. Students must juggle the physical changes that come with adolescence while balancing the increased responsibility of self-learning, self-advocacy, and organization. Ford (2010) states that over 3,700 research studies were conducted between 1991 and 2003 related to middle school education. An overarching goal of these publications was the development of a comprehensive, national definition for middle schools, hence the middle school concept. The research was aimed at creating not only an accurate definition for this awkward, critical stage of life, but also to define the challenges it creates for students and identify educational strategies that could be utilized to address the myriad social, emotional, and academic issues plaguing our adolescent, middle school populations.

#### **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)**

There are studies available to support the school-wide impact of AVID and the success of the program in assisting students at the high school level prepare for college. Watt, Huerta, & Cossio (2006) showed an increase in graduation rates, enrollment in advanced courses, and an improvement in accountability ratings measured by the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills and Dropout Rates for selected Texas high schools

participating in the AVID program. In 2007, Watt, Huerta and Lozano did a comparison of 10<sup>th</sup> graders in the GEAR UP program and the AVID program in two different Texas high schools. Their results showed significantly higher achievement for those students participating in the AVID program.

The AVID program utilizes research-based strategies and methods to attain the objectives set forth in the program, which makes AVID a model that is allowed to serve as a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) initiative by the federal government, as noted previously. Fashola and Slavin (1998) wrote that AVID is “worthy of consideration by other schools serving many students placed at risk” (pg. 86-87) due to the number of students entering postsecondary institutions after high school. Watt, Powell, Mendiola, and Cossio (2004) conducted a study that reviewed 10 AVID high schools, and the results showed that students involved in the AVID program had higher scores and outperformed their classmates on standardized exams and overall attendance. A previous study by Watt, Yanez, and Cossio (2002) corroborated these results. Martinez and Kloppett (2005) further support the findings, stating, “Because AVID proactively seeks to raise achievement and increase college preparedness for students at risk, it deliberately addresses the predictors of college-going behavior and uses college entrance and completion measures of its success, making it unique among the reform models examined in this study” (pg. 18). The literature suggests that the data collected show increased academic performance and lower attendance rates due in part to the fact that AVID utilizes pre-collegiate criteria as part of their national curriculum to raise the bar for students. This pushes the students academically and, as indicated in these studies, has a

positive effect on absenteeism. Per Martinez and Kloppett (2005), AVID is one of the only reform models to utilize pre-collegiate criteria as a model for educational reform.

Interestingly, in my literature search I discovered a study in the *Community College Journal of Research and Practice* that looked at the implementation of AVID in the community college setting. The study showed that after one semester, students involved in AVID reported that they were more organized, focused, and motivated to continue their studies (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2009b). Further investigation into the literature uncovered very few studies focused on the AVID program at the middle school level. Larry and Grace Guthrie (2002b) looked at a comparison of middle versus high school students who had been in the AVID middle school program. While I am looking to determine the effectiveness of the program at the middle school level, it must be noted that the Guthries were not focused on the overall effectiveness of AVID. What Larry and Grace Guthrie did conclude was that middle school students who were involved with AVID for two years had a significantly higher GPA in high school than students who were not in AVID (Guthrie, 2002). They concluded that AVID programs at the middle school level help prepare students for success in high school.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are a list of terms and definitions designed to clarify the key components of this project.

**Academic Middle:** Students who earn average grades, overall ranging from 2.0-3.5 GPA.

**Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID):** The acronym AVID represents an abbreviation of the Latin term *avidus*, meaning eager for knowledge.



Closing of the achievement gap: This is a phrase commonly used to refer to closing the academic achievement gap between White students and minority students. It is part of the AVID mission statement.

Florida Standards Assessment: K-12 state examinations focused on mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) to measure Florida students' education gains and progress. Students can score from a Level 1 (lowest) to a Level 5 (highest).

Minorities: For purposes of this research it means any student not coded as White in race.

Stakeholders: This is a term referring to any person or group interested in the welfare of middle school students, including school administrators, district leaders, teachers, parents and students.

Supplemental educational programs: Educational programs that are purchased by schools or districts to be used to increase student achievement.

### **Conclusion**

This literature review is intended to be both evaluative and comparative. The literature examines past research that evaluates the AVID program's effectiveness in relation to other supplemental educational programs. I included research regarding AVID's effectiveness beyond that of the high school level. In addition, articles of interest regarding middle school reform and the age of adolescents were included to help support this study's investigation in determining the effectiveness of the AVID program in middle schools given the lack of research in this particular age group and grade levels.

## **SECTION THREE: METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design Overview**

As of 2016, Alpha Bravo Public School District hired me to serve as the AVID Coordinator and Instructor for Delta Echo Middle School (DEMS). AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination and focuses on closing learning gaps and preparing students to attend college. The AVID Program at DEMS has been in place for six years, and the school currently holds a second-degree certification. To date, the efficacy of the program at DEMS has yet to be analyzed. The initial goal of this project was to evaluate anonymized data for students who started in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade at DEMS 6 years ago and statistically analyze the results of Florida Standard Assessment (FSA) results for mathematics and English language arts, grade point averages, and the number of advanced courses completed (College Board Advanced Placement Courses offered 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades). The data provided was longitudinal data following a given set of students from their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year to their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year of school. The evaluation also included voluntary surveys (Appendix C) and voluntary 30-minute interviews with administrators, teachers, and counselors (Appendix F and Appendix G). Details of how I conducted each evaluation method and completed the study is explained in the following paragraphs. The goal was to use the data to create a change leadership plan to enhance and advance the Delta Echo Middle School Program to move toward becoming an AVID Demonstration School and School of Distinction in the Alpha Bravo District

Given that AVID is offered as an elective to all students, including students with Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans, AB District aggregated data from the district to compare the FSA scores between the AVID students and those students not enrolled in

AVID courses. I compared the results from the AVID and non-AVID students to determine any improvement at the end of their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. I reviewed the FSA scores for mathematics and English language arts, GPA's, and enrollment in advance placement courses for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Delta Echo Middle School students from 2012-2013 school year through the 2016-2017 school year: up to 1,550 students per school year. I collected all data, comparing those students enrolled in AVID and the non-AVID students starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The N values per each year were 500 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and 500 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. No individual test scores or student identities were revealed. The student participants remained completely anonymous throughout the study.

In addition, I utilized voluntary, anonymous surveys distributed to the faculty and administration to determine the past and present perceptions regarding the efficacy of the AVID Program. The survey included questions as to identify areas of weakness in the current program and suggestions for improvement in the current system to establish a 5-year plan to becoming an AVID Demonstration School and School of Distinction (Appendix C).

In addition to the surveys, I conducted voluntary interviews with the principal, three assistant principals, five 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty members, two guidance counselors, and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade parent to create an accurate picture of the past, present, and future of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School. These interviews were strictly voluntary and set up as to not affect the normal school day. The following are the list of primary and secondary exploratory questions I utilized during the interview process.

The primary exploratory questions included:

1. What do the participants (administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, parents) report at working well with the AVID Program?
2. What do the same participants report as not working well in the program?
3. What do the same participants report as the greatest obstacles to maintaining a successful AVID program?
4. What ideas do the participants recommend to improve the program at Delta Echo Middle School?

My secondary exploratory question included

1. What effect, if any, was seen on those students' academic achievement as determined by the aggregated data provided by the ABPS District?

I determined the use of longitudinal data, surveys and interviews would provide a comprehensive picture of the past, present, and future of the AVID program at DEMS. The use of the three data collection methods allowed me to review the qualitative data in the form of the surveys and interviews and compare that data to the actual quantitative data provided by AB District. The goal in exploring the initial question is to determine where the program started and the current perceived status of the program. My professional goal, as determined by the district, is to grow the program and move DEMS from a Highly Certified classification to Demonstration School Status. The surveys and interviews involving the key stakeholders at DEMS establish the foundation on which to build the future. In all cases, the proof is in the numbers. Given the lack of data supporting the efficacy of AVID at the middle school level, the data is essential for providing statistical support to AVID's claims that the program increases academic performance and closes the achievement gap.

This research project contributes to the field of education due to the fact that AVID boasts a 35-year history on their website, AVID.org. The AVID College Readiness System (ACRS) states that AVID students outperform peers on grade point averages, state mandated exams, and various other standardized exams (Watt, Yanez, & Cossio, 2002; Watt, Powell, & Mendiola, 2004). To date, as the literature review revealed, there has been little to no analysis of the efficacy of the AVID program at the middle school level. All the studies have focused on the efficacy of the program at the high school level. It is my hope the findings of this study will help to expand the field of middle school educational reform and support AVID's claim of closing the educational learning gap and increasing academic performance at the middle school level.

### **Participants**

The participants in this study included voluntary participants for the interviews and surveys. Interviews included the principal, three assistant principals, five 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, two guidance counselors, and one parent. The teachers were chosen based on their participation in the AVID Summer Institutes, as they are most familiar with the goals and criteria of the national program as outlined by AVID.org. The participants were specifically chosen to gain a comprehensive picture of the AVID program at DEMS. The principal, assistant principals, teachers, guidance counselors and parent are all stakeholders and impacted by the success or failure of the AVID program at DEMS. In addition to the interviews, I collected and analyzed surveys. The surveys were brief, voluntary, open-ended surveys for the entire faculty at DEMS. This included 40 male and female participants ranging in age from 21 to 70 that work at the school and represent the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty. Although DEMS does have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, AVID is not

currently available to 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. There are no student participants in this study and no data was gathered directly from the students.

### **Data Gathering Techniques**

To gain a comprehensive evaluation of the efficacy of the AVID program at the middle school level, I requested permission from the district to quantitatively analyze data by running a statistical comparative study to determine the efficacy of the AVID program at the middle school level and substantiate the claims AVID makes in its literature stating that it raises student achievement. The district provided me with longitudinal data from one class of students from 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, I utilized surveys and interviews with key stakeholders to create a perceived qualitative picture of the efficacy of the AVID program and its components at one middle school within the district. The following sections describe the detailed results of the quantitative and qualitative evaluations I conducted.

#### **Surveys**

I utilized voluntary, anonymous surveys distributed to the faculty and administration to determine the past and present perceptions regarding the efficacy of the AVID Program. The survey included questions designed to identify areas of weakness in the current program and suggestions for improvement in the current system to establish a 5-year plan to becoming an AVID Demonstration School and School of Distinction (Appendix C). I placed a cover letter for voluntary participation in the survey (Appendix A), two copies of the informed consent for the adult participation survey (Appendix B), the printed faculty survey (Appendix C), and two envelopes labeled with the secretaries' names in the mailboxes of up to 40 faculty from DEMS, which included 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

grade teachers in all subject areas. The participating teachers returned the informed consent forms to two separate secretaries to ensure anonymity and prevent the teachers from feeling coerced to participate. If the teachers wished to participate, the cover letter instructed them to read and sign both copies of the informed consent (Appendix B). One copy was to be placed in the envelope marked for the principal's secretary and one is for their records. They turned in the sealed envelope to the principal's secretary, and she kept the informed consents in the folder for me. The second copy was for their records. Once they gave their consent, they completed the survey. I designed the survey to be completed in 10 minutes in order that it would not interfere with instructional time. Once the participants completed the questions, the surveys were placed in the second envelope provided and turned into the main secretary at the front desk. She maintained a folder for me for pick up. I used the two envelopes and two secretaries to ensure the anonymity of the participants, so I would not know which survey belonged with a certain consent form. In order that the teachers did not feel coerced to participate, those teachers who do not wish to participate simply threw away the informed consent and survey found in their mailboxes with no negative effectives. I also provided an informed consent to the site administrator (Appendix D) requesting permission to ask for voluntary participation from selected stakeholders to participate in this research study for both surveys and interviews.

### **Individual Interviews**

I asked the principal and 3 assistant principals, teachers (up to 5), and 2 guidance counselors to participate in the interview process. The teachers were chosen based on their participation in the AVID Summer Institutes, as they were most familiar with the goals of the national program as mentioned above from AVID.org. If the individuals said

yes, I gave them an informed consent for the interview (Appendix D) so they could preview it and we set a mutually agreeable time for the interview. During the time of the interview, I brought two additional copies of the informed consent, explained the consent, confirmed their understanding, and answered any questions they had before asking them to sign both copies. I retained one copy for the purpose of this study and the other was for their records. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants for accurate transcription. The interview questions for the administrators are found in Appendix E. The interview questions for the guidance counselors are found in Appendix F. The interview questions for the teachers are found in Appendix G. All interviews were no more than 30 minutes in length and were followed by a maximum of five emails to clarify comments.

### **Student Achievement Data**

Student achievement data was aggregated and distributed to me by ABPS District. This data was publicly available and used by the state of Florida to determine overall school grade by the Florida Department of Education. Individual student information remained completely anonymous. Given that AVID is offered as an elective to all students, including students with Individual Education Plans and 504 Plans necessitated by students' medical needs, AB District aggregated data from the district to compare the FSA scores between the AVID students and those students not enrolled in AVID courses. The results from the AVID and non-AVID were compared to determine any improvement at the end of their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year. FSA scores for mathematics and English language arts, GPA's and enrollment in advance placement courses was reviewed for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Delta Echo Middle School students from 2012-2013 school year through



the 2016-2017 school year: up to 1,550 students per school year. All data was collected comparing those students enrolled in AVID and the non-AVID students starting in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The N values per each year were 500 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and 500 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. No individual test scores or student identities were revealed. The student participants remained completely anonymous throughout the study.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

In this research study I used both a quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine the efficacy of the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School (DEMS). The analysis consisted of surveys, interviews, and a cross-sectional group study using 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student data provided by ABPS District comparing those students enrolled in the AVID program and those not in AVID. The goal of this research study was to ultimately evaluate the status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School and determine the steps necessary to move the program from Secondary Certification to School of Distinction Status in the Alpha Bravo District Public School District by using the qualitative and quantitative data collected.

### **Surveys**

The surveys (Appendix B) were collected per the directions outlined in the methodology section of this dissertation. I reviewed each of the questions and extracted themes from the answers to determine qualitative efficacy of the past, present, and future of the AVID program at DEMS. The details and analysis of each question on the survey can be found in the Findings Section of this research study.

## **Individual Interviews**

I conducted interviews with the following individuals: 1 principal, 3 assistant principals, 5 teachers including three teachers from 7<sup>th</sup> grade and two from 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and two guidance counselors. The interviews were conducted per the instructions discussed in the methodology portion of this research study. I taped and transcribed all interviews to ensure accuracy. I analyzed all the questions were individually per group including administrator and guidance counselors and support staff, which included faculty (Appendix G). The questions were analyzed to determine the qualitative efficacy of the AVID program at DEMS. The details and analysis of each question can be found in the Findings Section of this research study.

## **Student Achievement Data**

The ABPS District provided me with aggregated longitudinal data for students who started in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2012-2013 school year. The data included both AVID and non-AVID students. The data tracked the progress of these students through their senior year of high school. I analyzed the school district data based on student performance on the Florida Standard Assessment scores, grade point averages and enrollment in College Board Advanced Placement Courses. The cross-sectional group design was to analyze and investigate whether there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.5 level in the measured outcomes between those students enrolled in AVID at the middle school level and those who were non-AVID students.

The data provided was statistically analyzed using IBM SPSS software package. The results of the analysis are in descriptive tables and an analysis of variance to show if there was a statistically significant difference at the 0.5 level (Appendix J). The

dependent variables were the FSA Mathematic and English Language Arts test scores, grade point averages, and enrollment in College Board Advanced Placement Courses. The independent variables were the 7<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in the AVID program at DEMS and those students not enrolled in the AVID program at DEMS. I ran one-way ANOVA tests to determine if there was a statistical difference among the variables of FSA test scores, GPA and Advanced Placement class enrollment. The null hypothesis was no statistical significant difference in cognitive, academic outcomes for the students in the DEMS AVID middle school program when compared with those students not enrolled in the DEMS AVID program. For clarification, statistically speaking, if the null hypothesis is rejected then there is a statistically significant difference in the outcomes.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participation in this study did not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While the participants were not likely to have had any direct benefit from being in this research study, taking part in the study may contribute to their better understanding of the status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School. Participation may also contribute to their understanding of what changes need to be made in order to move the school from Secondary Certification to an AVID Center Demonstration School and School of Distinction within a 5-year period. Participation in this study was completely voluntary and the participants could have discontinued their involvement at any time without any negative effects. Student names were not associated with the scores to protect the anonymity of the individuals. The identity of the school, the district, and all participants were confidential and was not attached to the data. I used pseudonyms for all participants in the report. Only I have access to all the data collected,

including the consent forms, surveys, audio tapes, and interview notes from the interviews, which are kept in a locked cabinet at my home for up to five years after the completion of this study at which time I will shred and destroy all data.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I used the quantitative and qualitative data to determine and formulate a needs-based model for change. The goal of quantitative analysis was to substantiate AVID's claims of closing the achievement gap and raising student academic achievement at the middle school level. To date, very little data is available representing the AVID's academic impact on the middle school grades. The qualitative data was collected to determine the past, present, and future of the program at DE Middle School given the necessity for change. The use of quantitative and qualitative data provided me with a complete picture from which to create a continuous improvement plan.

## **SECTION FOUR: FINDINGS & INTERPRETATION**

### **Findings**

The following chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative and the quantitative data collected as part of the evaluation portion of this project. In addition, I will detail my interpretation of the findings. In the case of the quantitative data, I will detail the statistical significance or lack thereof from the longitudinal data provided to me by the district to substantiate AVID's claim that it raises academic achievement. In addition, the outcome of the qualitative data will be interpreted in such a way to show how it lead directly to the change leadership and continuous improvement plan established in the next section of the study.

### **Survey Data**

I distributed the voluntary surveys in the faculty and guidance counselors' mailboxes to include all 40 faculty members representing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty given that AVID is not offered to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Delta Echo Middle School. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty represent teachers with certification in the following areas (including remedial, honors, and gifted endorsements) including: math, English Language Arts (ELA), social studies, history, civics, science, reading, music, art, technology, ESE (Exceptional Student Education), ESOL (English as a Second Language) and VE (Varying Exceptionalities). All voluntary participants in the survey held active Florida Department of Education Teaching Certificates in their specific areas covering grades 6 through 12. None of these individuals were new teachers to the profession and none were considered AVID teachers or coordinators. All of the

participants previously attended AVID Summer Institute Professional Development Training.

I designed the survey to collect information on the past, present, and future of the AVID program at our school. Participation was completely voluntary, and the participants could decline altogether or leave any questions blank they did not wish to answer. The survey was designed to take approximate 10 minutes and did not interfere with instructional time. I asked all participants, if they voluntarily agreed to participate, to sign an informed consent. The informed consent and the surveys were collected by two different secretaries in order that all the participants and their responses would remain confidential and anonymous.

Of the 40 surveys distributed to faculty, I received 33 completed surveys. Faculty survey participation was 82.5%. The first question asked if the participants were male or female. In this study, 27 of the participants were female and the remaining 6 were male. This is representative of the overall teacher population at the school, which is approximately 80% female faculty and 20% male faculty.

The educational demographic of those surveyed indicated the highest level of education for those surveyed was as follows: 15/33 have a bachelor's degree, 16/33 have a master's degree and 2/33 have a doctoral degree. The surveys represent the school demographic: 44% of the faculty have a Bachelor's Degree, 50% have a Master's Degree and 6% have a Doctoral Degree.

The first two exploratory questions, labeled as 5 and 6 on the faculty survey, were designed to determine how well the participants felt the AVID program at our school prepared the students for their next academic year. Question #5 focused on the AVID

curriculum and its ability to prepare students for their next upcoming academic year. All faculty surveyed were participants in the AVID Summer Institutes in the past and were aware of the criteria established by AVID for admittance into the program. Out of the completed survey, 44% or 15/33 ranked the student preparation as moderate to extreme with a scale score of 3.0/4.0. Faculty who ranked the AVID Curriculum at 4.0/4.0 were 56% or 18/33. Based on data collected from question number 5, the current AVID program at DEMS ranked satisfactorily between moderate to extremely high regarding student preparedness for the next academic school year. This indicates that the AVID program at DEMS is beneficial to students' academic progression for those that are enrolled in the AVID program.

Question #6 on the Faculty Survey asked how satisfied the faculty was with the with the elective AVID course selection process. The survey found that 67% of the faculty surveyed or 22/33 were extremely satisfied with the AVID course selection process and ranked it as 4.0/4.0. The remaining 33% or 11/33 of the faculty who participated ranked it moderately high, giving it a score of 3.0/4.0 on the survey scale. There were no scores below 3.0 recorded on any of the 33/40 surveys collected. Based on this data collected from question #6, the current AVID program course selection process at DEMS ranked satisfactorily between moderate to extremely high. This indicates that the faculty stake holders at DEMS are satisfied with the current AVID program course selection process at DEMS. Qualitatively, these results can be translated to indicate that the AVID elective course selection process is targeting the correct group of students in need of the supplemental education program in addition to their core area courses.

Although this would seem to indicate very little need for change or improvement, the next six questions on the survey were specifically designed to analyze the exploratory questions of this evaluation. I analyzed each question separately, starting with faculty survey question #7: What is working well in the AVID program at DEMS? All 33 participants answered the question. Interestingly, 100% or 33/33 of those surveyed specifically commented regarding the positive “can do” environment that currently exists in the AVID program at our school. Ten of the 33 participants equated this to the instructor’s commitment to AVID students. The participants commented specifically and equated this environment directly to the trust and respect the students and their parents have for the current instructor. Six of the 10 who noted this observation went on to mention the personal connection with students, families, and faculty due to transparent and supportive communication. One individual noted this was “the first time in 4 years the core academic areas felt supported by the AVID program at DEMS.” Another participant noted the positive impact on all students, not just AVID students, from the “displays outside the classroom.” The participants directly correlated the positive environment, communication, and support to increased student intervention related to academic and behavioral issues. It must be noted that they did not mention an increase of academic achievement within the survey, but 3/33 observed what they described as “self-advocacy” on the part of the students when it came to their academic grades. AVID national curriculum mandates that all students maintain a 2.0 grade point average in all courses while enrolled in the elective. In addition, students and parents sign an AVID contract outlining conduct expectations for AVID students in the school.



The organizational tools specifically mentioned as working well with the AVID program at our school were the use of comprehensive binders, the Cornell Note System, and bi-weekly tutorials. All three of these items are required within the national AVID curriculum. Students must maintain a comprehensive binder that includes notes, handouts, and homework for all subjects; AVID students are required to use the Cornell Note System in all their core area courses and must participate in bi-weekly 10-step tutorials. All of these items are evaluated and graded by the AVID instructors. All of those surveyed mentioned one or all of these organizational tools in their specific responses to the survey question. In response to this question, 75% of the surveys collected stated specifically that when students utilized these organizational tools the teachers observed greater student accountability and improved test taking skills. The participants did not elaborate regarding the specific test taking skills, making this an excellent area of expansion and follow-up for further research. No teacher directly correlated the time management or organizational skills to an increase in academic achievement on the collected surveys.

Over 50% of the participants' answers focused on the "valuable skills" the students learn from participating in the AVID elective. They differentiated these skills into time management and organization. The faculty surveyed commented that the mandatory agendas and personal calendars helped the students to organize their academic and extracurricular activities. The AVID curriculum mandates that students must maintain an agenda or personal calendar. The goal of these tools is to assist students with time management and help them prioritize their day. An overwhelming 50% of the

faculty surveyed felt the agendas and personal calendars directly related to academic success by allowing the students to balance their school and home life activities.

The last noted theme in regard to what is currently working in the AVID program, specifically noted for question 7 on the survey, was the “real-world applications” and “real-world opportunities” offered to the students in the AVID elective classes. Of those surveyed, 45% made mention of these as something that was working very well in the program. Specifically, they mentioned the guest speakers, 7 Habits of Highly Effective People/Leader In Me Training, and collaboration with Buzz Aldrin ShareSpace Foundation and the acquisition of the cross-curricular Giant Mars Map and study materials. The participants noted that the use of these tools expanded the curriculum and allowed the students “to learn how math and reading relate directly to different careers” and “can help them solve real-life problems.” Overall, the qualitative data indicates that the soft skills, motivational tools, organizational strategies, and real-world beyond the classroom opportunities are working well in the AVID program. Based on the responses, these items translate from the AVID elective to the core area subject courses and qualitatively improve the student performance in those classes outside of the AVID elective class.

The next question the participants were asked to answer was #8: What suggestions would you make to help improve the AVID program at DEMS? This question related to any suggestions they would make to improve the current AVID program at our school. Even though all the participants had participated in the AVID Summer Institutes, 90% of those who answered the survey requested more professional development to explain the vision, mission, and core curriculum of the national AVID

program. The participants specifically commented regarding a lack of understanding between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Of those surveyed, 100% suggested professional development to help the entire faculty understand the importance of AVID at a “school like DEMS” as opposed to other schools with a lower socio-economic population. It was evident by these responses that there was still some question in the minds of the faculty as to why a consistent “A” school like DEMS needed a program like AVID. This is a legitimate observation and one that will need to be addressed in order to gain school-wide buy-in, which is essential for School of Distinction status. Another 10% requested a “refresher” about the AVID criteria for admittance.

It must be noted that 2/33 or 6% of the participants wrote in N/A or left the questions blank on the survey and 31/33 chose to answer. In addition, 1/31 of the participants who voluntarily chose to answer this question suggested implementing the AVID program at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level. The AVID program is available for K-12, but DEMS currently only offers the elective to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The focus of the comment by the participant was to be more proactive as the students enter the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, hoping to “help them learn the skills necessary to achieve greater academic success by the time they enter 8<sup>th</sup> grade when the grades start to really count.” In researching this question, I discovered that DEMS did offer AVID to incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders 3 years ago. Unfortunately, the acting administrator at the time, who is now no longer in the district, cut the program for the following academic year without notice. I was able to discuss this with the previous AVID Coordinator for DEMS informally and it is surmised that it was due to lack of interest and faculty support. In response to this question, the AVID program gained an additional 63 students for the 2017-2018 school year. AVID is an

elective class and, therefore, is not mandated to adhere to the class size amendment. Although there are no plans to add a teaching unit for the 2017-2018 school year, if the growth of the program at DEMS continues and interest grows among the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, the program will have to be expanded to include the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders for the 2018-2019 school year and additional teaching units. Unfortunately, this will be dictated by district and school budgets as well. Expansion will help support an additional comment made by one of the participants that the “classes should be smaller, and our school needs more than one teacher.” Overall, the qualitative analysis indicated the need for more professional development regarding the purpose of the AVID program at DEMS and the curriculum for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at DEMS. The surveys suggested the need for development of school wide strategies that could be implemented in core area classes outside that of the AVID elective class. These recommendations and suggestions fit directly in with the national criteria established by AVID Center to become a Demonstration School and School of Distinction. These suggestions will be brought to the DEMS Site Team’s attention for implementation during the 2017-2018 school year.

Question #9 on the faculty survey asked participants what they perceived as the greatest challenges associated with the AVID program at DEMS. Twenty-five percent of those surveyed utilized the back of their surveys to expand their answers. Ironically, there was a correlation between the suggestions and the challenges for 93% of those who answered this question. Those surveyed observed that the greatest challenge was “lack of understanding” about the program. This was leading to diminished “buy-in by all the teachers.” One of the participants also mentioned that this lack of knowledge and understanding was leading to lack of support from the community and families. All

participants commented that increased professional development and training would directly result in increased support and participation in the AVID program at our school. Three of the participants noted that the greatest challenge was understanding how and why the demographic population at DEMS will benefit from the program. Participants also mentioned the need for a better understanding of the AVID student profile as it directly relates to the socio-economic demographics of our school.

One additional challenge that was mentioned was the individualization of the AVID curriculum to better incorporate ESE or ESOL students. This is a valid challenge, as these students were often not admitted to the program. In response to this challenge, the current site team made an effort to work directly with our ESE and ESOL staff specialist to ensure that entry to the AVID elective was equal and equitable among all students and their families in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Much more needs to be done to accommodate and modify the curriculum to meet the individual needs of these students, but DEMS has taken the first step in addressing this challenge for the 2017-2018 school year.

A general challenge that was observed and specifically mentioned by 80% of the faculty surveyed was the need to intrinsically motivate students to perform better in school. Seventy-five percent of those who commented observed positive changes in the students. They equated to the positive culture being implemented by the new AVID coordinator and instructor. Further study would have to be done to determine if this seeming lack of intrinsic motivation is due to nature (social and emotional development), nurture (school environment), or a combination of both. There is no doubt this theme, as

noted by the faculty participants, is indeed a challenge and one that needs to be constantly and consistently addressed in our school. In short, it is not specific to the AVID program.

The last challenge noted by the participants, relates to the first observation, an understanding of the program. Two of the participants specifically commented on the placement of students in the AVID program. They noted the lack of understanding, specifically among the guidance counselors and their placement of at-risk students in need of grade recovery in the AVID program. These students do not meet the national AVID criteria but are placed in the program to “help save them from failing.” This is not part of the AVID mission or vision. Many of these students lack the work ethic and accountability necessary to succeed in the course. This challenge and observed lack of understanding was verified in the one-to-one interviews with the guidance counselors, which will be further developed during the discussion related to the interviews.

Given that only 2 of the 33 participants chose not to answer question #9 on the survey regarding the greatest challenges associated with the AVID program at our school indicates collective support for the supplemental education program at DEMS. The answers directly correlated with #8 in that the faculty expressed the need for greater education and professional development regarding the program. In addition, they seemed to indicate a need to expand the program to help students with special needs such as our English as a Second Language (ESOL) learners.

Questions #10 on the survey asked the participants to voice any changes they would like to see in the AVID program at our school in regard to student admittance, the curriculum, student and parent engagement, and administrative support. Fourteen of thirty-three participants voluntarily chose not to answer question #10. Many of the

suggested changes mentioned for question #10 related directly to the challenges and the suggestions the participants made to improve the program as discussed above. Ten of fourteen individuals requested more professional development during the year to educate teachers and parents about the national AVID curriculum and the elective as it relates to the students at DEMS. Four of fourteen requested that the AVID tutorials be expanded to include those students who are not involved in the elective. The participants commented on the benefits of the tutorials and did relate the extra study time to better performance on mathematics and science exams specifically. This is absolutely a feasible change that could easily be implemented during AVID Club meetings or during the breakfast hours as the students are being bused in prior to the start of school. One of fourteen suggested more field trips for the students. This supports the need for more education, as the students in the course ventured to various sites and heard many speakers using Skype technology. District and school budgets and the need for course hours specifically in reading, ELA, and mathematics, makes this change a bit more difficult to implement. Educating the faculty and extending greater invitations for schoolwide participation may be a way to create this change. Both suggestions will help move the school one step closer to the goal of becoming a school of distinction within the five-year period.

Question #11 was an additional open-ended question that asked participants to share any other information regarding their experiences with the AVID program in the past or present. Thirty-two of thirty-three chose to comment on question #11. The comments all pertained to the AVID program for the 2016-2017 school year. One participant stated that the AVID program “reached new heights” during the school year. The participants noted that the students seemed to value the program more than in

previous years. Based on the comments, the change in the program and the students was directly related to the new AVID coordinator and the expanded real-world activities introduced to the curriculum. One participant noted that the new teacher's "whole knowledge" is motivating not only the students but the faculty, as well. Overall, this indicated, as a supplemental education program at DEMS, the AVID program is "on the right track." The surveys indicated a level of faculty support and engagement necessary to move the program forward in the coming years. Ideally, in analyzing the responses, my goal is to separate the positive response from the coordinator to the program itself. The AVID program at DEMS should solicit the same positive responses regardless of the individual serving as the coordinator of the program for DEMS. My goal, based on this qualitative survey data, is to empower the faculty with the strategies necessary to move the school toward our goal of earning national recognition by AVID center.

### **Interview Data**

To gain further qualitative data for my research study, I interviewed the principal, 3 additional administrators, and two guidance counselors (Appendix F) and 5 faculty members (Appendix G). The interviews and the questions were used to gain firsthand knowledge of the past, present, and future of the effectiveness of the AVID program at DEMS. The methodology used to conduct the interviews was listed in a previous chapter. The first set of questions analyzed for thematic responses are the questions asked of the administrators and counselors during the interviews (Appendix F).

Question #1 referred to the ABPS District implementation of the AVID program at DEMS. In response to this question, the principal and three assistants stated that they did not know the rationale for the roll-out of the AVID programs throughout the district.



All the administrators “inherited” the program at DEMS. One assistant served as a faculty member during the time that the program was introduced to the school but stated she did not know “how or why” DEMS was chosen to participate in the supplemental education program. During the interview, the principal stated she knew AVID to be a “high school” level education program and was surprised to learn the program had been expanded to include the middle schools. One assistant administrator stated he knew of AVID but was surprised to find it at a non-Title I school such as DEMS. I need to conduct further interviews with officials within the ABPS District who were instrumental in the implementation and roll-out of the middle school AVID programs in the district. Both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselors had similar responses as they were hired after the AVID program had been implemented as an elective class for the DEMS. They declined to answer the questions directly given their lack of knowledge regarding the adoption and implementation of the AVID program in ABPS District. Although, the history would have been nice to know regarding the “when, how and why” of the AVID program at DEMS, it was not essential to the study, given the district’s present commitment and expansion of the national AVID contract to include not only middle and high schools but several elementary schools as well.

Question #2 asked for comment regarding the support the administrators and counselors felt the district offered in regard to the AVID program at DEMS. The administrators and counselors all said as they felt more comfortable responding to the level of support offered within the past 4 years of the program rather than the establishment of the program at DEMS. The one counselor and assistant administrator who were employed at the school during the establishment of the program stated in the

interviews that they were “too far removed from the program to give an accurate account or opinion.” Each school that was chosen by the district was allocated another teaching unit to coordinate the program and teach the AVID curriculum. The district spearheaded the hiring of these individuals in partnership with the principals from each school. Panel interviews were held at each school, including one consisting of the district AVID directors, the principal, at least one of the assistant principals, one counselor, faculty members and one parent representative. Once the individuals were chosen, the district supervised the training, professional development, and establishment of the program at the middle school. The funding for these positions came from the AB District, which included a spending budget for the individual program at the school. The coordinator/instructor was considered part of the elective faculty at the school but answered to both the principal and the AVID district director. The counselors felt they were a peripheral part of the process and only present in the candidate interviews to give feedback regarding the person’s ability to fit into the culture of the school. The counselors stated in the interview that they were unaware of the budget for the position and the budgets allotted for the programs at each school. Overall, the qualitative impression I received from the interviews was that AVID was a district initiative in which the schools had “no direct say.” The administration was key in the hiring process for each school, including DEMS, but district supported the program professionally and monetarily from that point. One assistant administrator mentioned the district “had invested interest given the cost to contract with the AVID program nationally.” I further inquired if they knew the cost of the contract. They stated they did not but “thought it must be substantial.” The point of my question was to determine the cost to academic

achievement ratio for AVID as one of many supplemental education programs. As a parent, tax payer, and teacher in the AB District, I felt these questions were pertinent in helping to determine the cost benefit ratio for having such a program in the district. As a supplemental education program, districts must contract with AVID National to implement the program in their schools. I was specifically interested in the cost given that the AB District holds one of the largest contracts with AVID in the nation. My initial inquiry did not result in a specific answer, and further investigation would have to be done. This is of great interest given the district's current initiative to expand AVID to the elementary schools in the AB District.

Question #3 inquired as to their opinion of the program at the start and how the faculty perceived the AVID program at DEMS. In discussing Question #3, all parties interviewed offered an answer to question #6, which related to how, when, and why the program changed over time. I allowed the conversations to flow freely and did not repeat the question in any of the interviews. The principal, one counselor, and two of the administrators said in the interview that the AVID program at DEMS was "seemingly schoolwide" at the time they were hired at DEMS. The principal stated in the interview that the program was active in "all grade levels including the 6<sup>th</sup> grade wheel" at the time she took over as principal of the school. Several teachers had been trained and had attended the professional developments offered by the district. The school was attempting to make the organizational strategies, namely the 3-ring binders, a schoolwide requirement for all grades. The original coordinator hired by the district was a "very effective cheerleader" and did a "wonderful job" encouraging and inspiring the faculty to participate. All the administrators and counselors spoke very highly of this individual and

were very complementary in regard to her talents and abilities to manage and lead the program. The program seemed to be at its peak based on their comments. Of course, this inspired my further inquiry as to “what happened.” It was no secret during the interview that I was hired to rebuild and expand the program. One assistant principal stated that “good people don’t last long. They either aspire to higher paying positions or are tapped to help manage and lead other programs that may be potentially failing.” This was the case with the first coordinator of which they spoke so highly. The district officials tapped her to move into administration. Given her personal aspirations, she took the position and became an administrator at another school. The principal verified this story in her interview and commented that “now you know why I asked if you were interested in becoming an administrator in the next several years during your interview. I probably should not have asked, but I did not want to be back in the same boat.” Overall, the faculty were supportive of the original coordinator and instructor. She seemed to be quite the “Pied Piper of AVID.” Sadly, every administrator and counselor admitted that when she left the program and the perception of the program declined and the faculty lost interest. The initiatives that were once schoolwide quickly went by the wayside in the short time it took to find someone to replace the coordinator. These answers seemed to correlate with the qualitative survey data that successful perception of the program seems to be tied directly to the coordinator at the school and not the AVID program itself.

Unfortunately, the next coordinator was not “as dynamic” as the first and the program immediately began to decline. The counselors noted that the change of the coordinator caused an increase in students requesting an elective change. The counselors said in the interview the students complained “they didn’t do anything and the class was

boring.” They both stated they dealt with a “few” parent complaints about the class as well. One assistant principal said “she never saw the coordinator [referring to the newly hired individual]. She seemed content to do her own thing in her room.” This assistant administrator felt this lack of visibility among the faculty caused them to lose confidence in the program. Their lack of support translated to the students and caused a downward spiral that eventually lead to lack of administrative support for the AVID program at DEMS. I questioned the principal regrading this specific impression and she stated “admittedly, I could have been more supportive of [the coordinator] and the program.” The student complaints filtered from the guidance office to the administration, and the new hire only lasted a year and requested to be transferred from the school. I was hired to take her position. This information was imperative given that I was hired to revitalize the stagnant program and breathe new life into the AVID program at the school. The information provided was key in establishing a new leadership model and new policies discussed later in this study.

Question #4 inquired as to what things worked well with the AVID program. Interestingly, again, all those interviewed seemed to feel that the morale and support of the AVID program by all the stakeholders was much better under the coordination of the original instructor hired by the district. The administrators all made comments implying that the faculty was more open to trying the AVID strategies and AVID’s WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to learn) were common vocabulary used throughout all core classes. The coordinator kept the students interested due to engaging lessons, and the program seemed to flourish under her care. Both counselors commented on the organizational strategies inherent to the AVID course

including the multi-subject binders and agendas. They both felt that “these tools helped marginal students succeed.” I found it interesting that no mention was made of class activities or field trips by the administrators or counselors. This is a large component of the national curriculum, and none made mention when speaking of either of the previous coordinators at DEMS. This was of concern to me, as it indicated that the previous coordinators and AVID academic teachers were not actually following the prescribed AVID curriculum. AVID has a standardized curriculum that is used throughout the nation at the secondary level, which includes guest speakers, field trips, and use of technology in the classroom as part of the AVID standards as outlined in the curriculum available form AVID Central.

Question #5, regarding what did not work well with the AVID program, circled back to the previous questions. Three of the administrators and the principal felt the coordinator “seemed to make or break the (AVID) program” at DEMS. The counselors and administrators commented that they had a general knowledge of the national curriculum established by AVID Center but “were not experts.” The implication from all the interviews was that the program did not work well when the coordinator/instructor was not fully engaged. The principal made mention that “teachers are reluctant to try new strategies without a great cheerleader.” Sadly, many view new ideas and new learning strategies like those embedded in AVID’s WICOR as extra work. Two assistant principals commented that “teachers do not need one more thing on their plates during the school year.” Having served as science teacher for many years prior to accepting the position as the AVID Coordinator at DEMS, I absolutely understood their comments and the reason for the reluctance by the staff. Over all, it seemed through our conversations

that it was not the curriculum that did not work well, it was the leadership and the management of the program. There is no doubt to successfully run and grow the AVID program at any school, the coordinator must be both a leader and a manager.

For question #7 there were two obstacles that seemed prominent. The administrators felt the greatest obstacle was finding the “right person” to run the AVID program. The principal and all three assistants made mention that, while the second coordinator hired was a “lovely person,” she was “not a fit for the culture of the school.” This lack of fit lead to the decline in faculty, family, and student involvement in the program. Eventually, admittedly, this trickled into lack of administrative support for the program at DEMS: “Hiring the right person for the AVID position is much more difficult than hiring for just a science or math class. The AVID teachers must be so well rounded. It is difficult to find.”

The counselors on the other hand felt the greatest obstacle was the lack of engagement in the classroom. Although they claim not to be experts in the curriculum, when the second individual was hired, they were overwhelmed with the number of “schedule change requests.” I asked them the reason and they both commented that when the students were questioned, the consensus was “the class is so boring.” The students and families were losing interest in the program. In digging a little deeper, they both commented they felt this was due to the leadership of the course. It did not seem to have anything to do with the curriculum itself. I was concerned about this comment due to previous comments and seeming lack of guest speakers and field trips. If only the writing, reading, and organizational components of AVID were being adhered too, it would be feasible for the class to appear “boring.”

The last question led directly into Question #8 regarding any suggestions to overcome the obstacles the AVID program at DEMS had experienced in the past. Interestingly, 100% of those interviewed stated emphatically, “we hired you.” Although flattered by the compliment, I wanted to understand how they felt my hiring seemed to be overcoming the obstacles they had in the past. All the administrators and one of the counselors commented that it was my ability as a leader to engage the faculty once again. They stated that the faculty felt supported by the AVID program. The one counselor mentioned my involvement in conferences and willingness to take the lead during the difficult conversations when students were not working to their potential. Two of the assistant principals commented on the soft-skills and professionalism that were required of the AVID students: “These seemed to carry over into their other classes” and “We know you walked students to teacher’s classrooms and made them not only write letters of apology but apologize in person.” In all the conversations, the suggestion was to “keep doing what you are doing and don’t leave DEMS.” It was evident in the conversations that earning the faculty’s respect and support were key to the success and growth of this program.

Question #9 seemed a natural transition as it related to the changes the stakeholders perceived with the change of leadership and my hire as the new AVID coordinator for the program at DEMS. They were eager to share their excitement and opinions about the changes they were seeing in the program. Of those interviewed, 100% stated that they thought the program was better than it had ever been. They understood that the first year as coordinator is really spent learning the culture and earning the trust of the faculty. Two of the administrators said they “were amazed at how much was



accomplished in one year.” The counselors both commented that they had never seen “this number of applicants for the AVID elective” in their history of being at the school. The principal mentioned “this was the first year in all my years at DEMS I did not have to beg teachers to attend AVID Summer Institute.” The assistant principals commented on a change in the level of discipline in the students and the new expectation of professionalism for all the students enrolled in the AVID class. This expectation is transferring to other classes and “the AVID students seem to be setting the bar in all their classes.” The principal made direct mention of DEMS new affiliation with the Buzz Aldrin ShareSpace Foundation, Stephen Covey’s The Leader In Me Program, Think Global Flight, Janet’s Planet, and international relationships with schools in Norway and Trinidad as extraordinary opportunities that the DEMS students could not get anywhere else. One counselor made mention of the “AVID community in the classroom.” She stated she admittedly was placing the students who were new to DEMS in the middle of the year in the AVID classes because she knew they would be welcomed and supported with open arms. All of those interviewed also made comments relating to family involvement, including using the parents in our community as guest speakers for the classes. It was evident by their demeanor and excitement that every person interviewed had a positive perception of the current AVID program at DEMS. The one assistant principal stated “if things keep growing like this year, we are going to need another AVID teacher soon.” These are the types of problems one wishes to have when rebuilding and revitalizing any program.

Question #10 related to the vision of the AVID program and where they saw the program in five years. Every person interviewed turned this question around to me: “As

the coordinator, where do you want us (DEMS) to be in 5 years?" I used the question to briefly outline the process of becoming an AVID Demonstration School and eventually a nationally recognized AVID School of Distinction. Interestingly, those questioned were not aware of the details necessary to becoming an AVID Demonstrations school and had not had these types of conversations with the previous coordinators. Once I explained the process, 100% of those interviewed were on board with the idea and supportive of this growth mindset. They see AVID as a positive experience for the students, families, and faculty. The counselors offered their continued support in screening students for the AVID elective. In addition, the principal gave her 100% backing for all the new initiatives coming for the 2017-2018 school year. This included allowing a representative from AVID Center to speak to the entire faculty at this year's pre-planning. As the coordinator of the program, I could not ask for a better, more supportive administrative team of principals and counselors. During the interview, I was able to share with the administrators and counselors that during AVID Summer Institute, DEMS had been earmarked by the ABPS District as a potential AVID Demonstration School Candidate. In short, this means DEMS and the administrative team at the school has the backing of the district to help reach our goals.

As I wrapped up the interviews, Question #11 simply inquired as to anything else the individuals would like to share with me regarding the AVID program at DEMS. All of the participants said to "keep doing what you are doing." Two of the assistant administrators asked me to stay a "very long time." Over all, throughout the entire interview process, I felt the interviews corresponded well with the faculty surveys. Although the AVID program at DEMS had its up and downs in the past, it was currently

on the right track. The administrative team and the counselors were satisfied to highly satisfied with the progress we made over the last year and were fully supportive of the goals we established for the program in the next five years.

The second set of interviews involved faculty members from various subject areas. The questions can be found in Appendix G. The five faculty members volunteered to be interviewed for 30 minutes and represented the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade faculty from mathematics, English language arts, social studies, science, and reading. They ranged in teaching experience from 1 year to 14 years. One of the teachers served at DEMS since it was started 14 years ago. As with the interviews conducted with the administrators and counselors, I will group thematic responses per question number to protect the anonymity of those interviewed.

Question #1 asked the role the administration played during the establishment of the AVID program at DEMS. Only one of the teachers responded, as the others stated they were not part of the faculty at that time. The one teacher viewed the program as a “district mandated program” and felt the administration of the school was really given “no choice” regarding the implementation of the program. The impression that she gave in the interview was it was viewed as one more thing to do and an initiative that might not last. I further asked if she knew the history and how DEMS was chosen as a school for the program. She did not know, as the faculty was never directly involved with the process. Once again, further interviews would have to be conducted with ABPS District officials to investigate the implementation of the program and the how and why certain schools were chosen.

Question #2 related to the early onset of the program and the impression of the faculty regarding administrative support of the program. Four of the five teachers interviewed expressed the same thoughts that were transcribed from the administrator and counselor interviews. The original coordinator/instructor seemed to have full support of the administration and faculty. AVID strategies were widely used in most classrooms, and the teachers I interviewed felt it was an expectation of the administration; when they did walk-throughs, they would see strategies like AVID's WICOR being used in the core area classes. When the first coordinator was promoted and left the school, the program lost momentum. Interestingly, all five teachers felt the new person hired was "nice, but just didn't fit with the school." Their universal perception was, unlike the first coordinator, the new person kept to herself and her classroom. The faculty lost interest in the program as they did not feel supported. One teacher stated, "It was pretty obvious within the first quarter that it (meaning the AVID program) was not working as well. The administration wasn't very happy. We weren't at all surprised to hear the (new coordinator) wanted to transfer." The impression I receive from the faculty, similar to that of the administration, was that the change of leadership led to the decline in support from not only the administration but the faculty and families as well. This question transitioned into an answer for #7 without me even having to ask the question directly. The faculty perception was that the program worked well under the leadership of the first coordinator, as mentioned above. She was able to engage the students, families, and faculty. As mentioned in the write up of the interviews with the administrators and counselors, she aspired to serve at a higher level in the ABPS District and left the program willingly after being asked to take an administrator position at another school.

The “changing of the guard” brought an entirely different personality to lead the program, and she was, admittedly by both faculty and administrators, not a fit for the culture of DEMS. As a follow-up to this research, it would be interesting to request and interview with former coordinator to investigate her opinions and impressions of her year at DEMS.

Question #3 seemed to naturally flow with Question #2, and the faculty members interviewed all agreed that the program at the onset was successful. As mentioned above, they attribute this success to the coordinator/instructor of the program. They all stated that the change of leadership of the AVID program seemed to lead to its decline. Interestingly, this question also answered question #5 regarding what things did not work well with the AVID program. Overall, the decline of the program and what did not work well seemed to be a lack of engagement by the coordinator that trickled down to the faculty and students. This eventually permeated the administration, leading to what was perceived as a lack of support from the top down. Their perceptions of the success or failure of the program were not at all related to the curriculum but directly to the leadership of the AVID program at DEMS.

Question #6 regarding the current impressions of the AVID program at DEMS were met with 100% positive support. The faculty commented about the level of support for the core courses through use of AVID tutorials. All five faculty members made mention of the coordinator’s involvement in conferences and willingness to have the “tough talks with parents.” In addition, all five mentioned the level of professionalism and high expectations of the current AVID students, which also included discipline and behavior in classes other than that of AVID. Three of the five mentioned new opportunities for all the students at DEMS, given that all teachers and classes are invited

when monthly guest speakers come into the AVID classroom. Overall, the perception was overwhelmingly positive. Several of the individuals interviewed said “keep doing what you are doing and don’t ever leave.” Again, this left the impression that their perception of the success or failure of the AVID program was due to the leadership and management of the supplemental program as opposed to the program itself.

The teacher with the most tenure was the most vocal in relationship to question #8. The others, when asked about the obstacles facing the program, parroted the same responses from the previous questions. Interestingly, the one long-term teacher stated that the biggest obstacle this past year was “not wanting to like you or get too attached.” She added, “We didn’t want to get too involved until we knew you were committed to us and DEMS.” This spoke volumes to me as a teacher and researcher. Despite the successful year we had in 2016-2017, some of the faculty were reluctant to get onboard given the “revolving door” of AVID program coordinators. The overall impression was that I was fit for the culture, but they weren’t sure how long I would stay. Interestingly, this same teacher made mention of the fact that I had my own children enrolled at DEMS and two at a local elementary. This seemed to help alleviate some of the initial concern regarding my commitment to DEMS. I was able to answer my own question #9, as this is a very real obstacle and one that only time will overcome.

Regarding question #10, the greatest benefit to both the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students was the use of the biweekly tutorials and accountability factor. All five of the faculty expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the tutorials offered Tuesdays and Thursdays. Of the five faculty members, 100% felt these helped the students get homework done in a timely manner, prepare for examinations that week, and allowed

time to make-up any missing work. In conjunction with the tutorials, the built-in accountability factors, which included weekly grade checks and assignment logs, helped to keep the students up to date and proactive regarding their assignments. Two of three teachers also commented that this helped the students “advocate for themselves” and become more “internally self-driven to succeed” in other classes. Often the AVID students would serve as leaders in their other core classes. Interestingly, no mention was made as to the student’s academic performance in their other classes. The teachers were aware of the national minimum requirement of a 2.0 GPA to remain in the elective and made no mention of the AVID students consistently outperforming the other students in their classes. The theme of their comments related directly to the 21<sup>st</sup> century soft-skills identified so effectively in Stephen Covey’s Leader In Me curriculum used in the course this past year. The 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills include collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity.

Question #11 dealt with the benefits to the faculty as opposed to the students. All five mentioned the fact that as the new coordinator I also taught “core” for several years prior to coming to DEMS. As one teacher put it, “You understand the tight timing of the curriculum maps and the pressure we deal with when it comes to the E.O.C.s (End of Course Examinations).” The resounding theme in all their responses was that the AVID program supported the core: “You said in many conferences, no one cares what you (meaning the student in the conference) get in AVID. It is an elective. Your poor grades in mathematics, science, English language arts, and social studies will keep you from graduating.” All the teachers interviewed expressed a positive response to my willingness to attend their subject area meetings and keep a running log regarding any major tests or

examinations for the week. They felt the tutorials were geared toward those areas, and felt it helped students perform in the class. The tutorials were arranged to support major examinations and projects in all the core area subjects. Four of the five teachers requested more professional development, as they would like to utilize some of the AVID strategies in their classrooms. They are already using AVID's WICOR to a degree but expressed a desire to use it with more fidelity. Another area of noted interest was the proper use of the Cornell Note Taking System. Overall, the faculty was very supportive in their responses and seemed hungry for more information. This year, for the first time, we had a waiting list of individuals who wanted to attend the AVID Summer Institute. All five of those who volunteered to be interviewed had attended in the past or attended this year. They all stated it was a very productive professional development and left with useful tools that could be used in each of their areas of specialty. The teaching strategies, which centered on the previously mentioned soft skills taught at the AVID Summer Institute, were action plans that could be used in any classroom and within any subject. The plans included incorporation of reading, writing, and collaboration strategies to help students not only learn new topics but retain the information. Their observations were very encouraging to me as the new coordinator, given my need to attract and encourage new faculty members to give up one week of their summer to attend an AVID Summer Institute.

Like the interviews with the administrators and counselors, in response to #12, the faculty members unanimously turned the question on me and said "just keep doing what you are doing." We took the opportunity to discuss the AVID Demonstration School status and AVID School of Distinction Certification. Overwhelmingly, they offered their



support and asked what they could do to help the students and DEMS reach those goals. The overall impression I received was positive. The teachers seemed to feel 100% supported by the AVID program and the coordinator, and because of this, they were willing to engage fully in helping DEMS to attain its goals. To reach Demonstration School status, AVID best practices must be schoolwide. My goal was to understand their developmental needs so they could feel supported within their own academic specialties to build trust and the team necessary to meet AVID's national requirements to earn one of the highest levels of certification.

Lastly, all the faculty members answered #13 with a question: "How long are you planning to stay?" They were excited to hear that my youngest child was only in fourth grade and understood my commitment to seeing all my children through the awkward middle school years. They insisted that I "just stay with us and keep doing what you are doing." Ideally, while this is personally comforting, their answers made it clear that there is work to be done at DEMS. The AVID program should "stand alone" regardless of the coordinator. A truly successful program is one that will maintain momentum even at the changing of the guard.

Qualitative analysis of the interviews illustrated a positive response to the current AVID program at DEMS. An overarching theme in all the interviews was that the success of the program at DEMS was linked directly to the coordinator. The ups and downs of the program were perceived to be in direct correlation to the leadership and management of the AVID program at DEMS. Overall, the program at DEMS was perceived to be in an upswing. The administrators, counselors, and faculty were

supportive of the short, mid, and long-term goals being established and seemed excited about the opportunities these will open for all the stakeholders at DEMS.

### **Student Data**

The data provided to me by the district was longitudinal data from a class of students starting in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and following them through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. I utilized IBM SPSS 2003 to analyze the data to determine any statistical significance to support the claim by AVID founders that AVID raises the academic achievement level and closes the academic achievement gap between AVID and non-AVID students. The district provided data that was grouped according to grade level starting with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. The categories the district provided for me as means to analyze the effect of AVID over the 6-year period of time were: students enrolled in AVID, the number of honors courses enrolled, Florida Comprehensive Assessment Reading and Math Level Scores, and state grade point average. Each grade level was broken into these categories. The variables that were not distinguished in the data were the race/ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status, or educational grouping such as Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans, or Gifted and Talented. The total sample size was 134 students. The number of AVID students enrolled in each grade level is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Number of AVID students per grade level*

7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
67	53	28	22	16	9

Table 1 illustrates the number of students in each of the grade levels within the total sample size of 134 students. This data was provided to me from the AB Public School District. The parameters of the data are not known. The district did not provide

me with the information as to whether this data is from a specific school in the AB Public School District or simply a random sample of AVID and non-AVID students from the county's data base. Given that the number of AVID students varies from each grade level, I analyzed the data separately within each grade group.

The goal of the statistical analysis was to compare two groups of students in each individual grade level. The two groups being compared were AVID students versus non-AVID students. I used t-tests given it is an inferential and parametric statistic. The t-test is designed to uncover even the slightest difference between the two groups. I decided to use the t-test, given that the raw data scores at every grade level were within such close range of each other. My goal was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the AVID and non-AVID students. Ultimately, even though the data did not represent the DE Middle School population, this quantitative analysis was intended to substantiate and support AVID Central's claims that the program increases academic achievement levels and closes the achievement gap among students. The null hypothesis for the t-tests was that there is no difference between the AVID and non-AVID mean scores in every category. While the data the district provided met two of the assumptions necessary for accuracy, it is evident by the data that the AVID and non-AVID student groups do not have the same number of subjects. In order to compensate for this, I ran the data on students with at least 1 year of avid against the non-avid students so the parameters are almost the same for each test. The t-test can be found in Appendix K. All t-tests were run with a standard alpha 0.05. Based on the values recorded in the tables for every grade level, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. I did run some tests comparing AVID 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> students to non-AVID, so those

parameters would not be the same. You can see from the t-test that the data that showed significance and the observations were almost identical. The 9th grade honors had 62 avid and 61 non-avid and the 11th grade honors had 56 and 56. The only other significance was the number of AP tests passed in 12th grade, and they had 37 avid and 31 non-avid. The 12th grade AP tests-passed significance did not support the AVID students. Based on my analysis of the quantitative data, no statistical significance could be found in any category for the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade data as it related to AVID’s claim to increase or improve the academic achievement of AVID students to that of their non-AVID counterparts.

After running the parametric statistic, I created cross comparison charts to further describe the data that was given to me by the district. These charts are to be used simply to gain a “big picture” understanding of the longitudinal data the county provided. The first comparison chart shows the number of honors-courses-enrolled. This picture relates to the statistical results and support of the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the AVID and non-AVID students enrolled in rigorous, honors, and pre-college level courses in middle and high school. The following data shows the average number of honors-course-enrolled at each of the grade levels starting at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Table 2 compares the non-AVID students and the average number of honors courses to which they were enrolled to the AVID students and their averages.

Table 2

*Honors courses enrolled averages between AVID and non-AVID students*

Students	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
No AVID	0.12	1.15	2.44	2.32	1.79
AVID	0.06	1.10	3.08	2.47	2.77
Average for all students	0.09	1.12	2.76	2.40	2.28

Interestingly, there is a slightly higher enrollment by the AVID students starting the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and extending through 12<sup>th</sup> grade must be noted. Part of the certification process for the high school AVID programs assess student progress as they matriculate 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. At least 50% of the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade AVID elective students must be enrolled or have completed at least “one course of rigor” (AVID Handbook, 2017, p. 23) including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or dual enrollment. The number of students from the 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades starts at 28 and drops to 9 by the senior year of high school.

The next block of comparisons that could be illustrated from the data related to the average FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test) scores between the AVID and Non- AVID students from the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. The 11<sup>th</sup> graders take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) and finish their high school career by taking the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) at the end of their junior year or beginning of their senior year for admittance to college. The FCAT data is in the following table:

Table 3

*Average FCAT scores for AVID and non-AVID students*

	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade	9 <sup>th</sup> grade	10 <sup>th</sup> grade
Non-AVID students	67	76	95	94
AVID students	67	53	28	22
Total students tested	134	129	123	116
Non-AVID FCAT reading scores	1,950	2,014	2,102	255
AVID FCAT reading scores	1,912	2,011	1,998	249
Total average	1,931	2,012	2,078	254

When analyzing the picture comparison of the FCAT reading scores data, I noted that all of the AVID students were recorded as taking the test. Unfortunately, there were students in the non-AVID category that did not take the test and were not accounted for in

the data provided. The total number of students with recorded FCAT Reading Scores was 134 at 7<sup>th</sup> grade and went down to 116 by the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. I found it interesting that the comparison showed the AVID students' scores versus the Non-AVID students' scored differed by only 2% at the most from those students that were not in the AVID Elective classes. Looking at the simple average between the two groups, the AVID students' scores were slightly less than 4% lower than that of the total average scores taken from both groups. The raw data appears to illustrate that the AVID students are on par with their non-AVID colleagues. It must be noted that the FCAT math scores were provided for the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. There was only a 4-point difference in the average math scores between the 8<sup>th</sup> grade AVID and Non-AVID students and a 26-point difference in the average 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. The data would seem to suggest that the AVID students are on par or only slightly below their non-AVID counterparts. What the data does not indicate is that the AVID students are above or outperforming the non-AVID students on standardized exams.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, the AVID and non-AVID students were tested using the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test). The PSAT is broken into three sections: verbal, math, and writing. Only 112 scores were reported in the data. Table 4 shows the comparative ratio between the AVID and non-AVID students who took the exam and their scores broken into the three testing subjects.

Table 4

*11<sup>th</sup> grade AVID and non-AVID student PSAT comparison*

PSAT	Non-AVID (n=96)	AVID (n=16)	Total average (n=112)
Verbal	49	45	48
Math	47	46	47
Writing	46	43	46

The largest gap is noted in the PSAT verbal category. This difference is less than 2%. The AVID students, similar to the results of the FCAT scores, were below the average of the two groups when grouped in comparison. The raw data suggests that the AVID students are on par with the non-AVID students.

The last area I compared was state grade point averages between the Non-AVID and AVID students. The non-AVID students averaged a 3.11 GPA, while the AVID students' average upon graduation was 3.05 GPA. The total average was 3.08. Once again, the AVID students' grade point averages at graduation fell slightly below the average total for the two groups, as can be seen in Table 4 and does not substantiate AVID's claims to increase grade point averages.

Overall, the lack of statistical significance in all of the t-tests could possibly be due to a very low sample size. Also, as the students matriculated through the grade levels, the numbers of students enrolled in the AVID program kept dropping. This drop in enrollment fails to meet one of the preliminary assumptions necessary to conduct a t-test due to the fact that the AVID and non-AVID groups did not have a reasonably close to equal number of subjects. If the district had provided me with a larger sample-size this assumption may have been met. Further studies should be conducted using a larger samples size with known parameters to accurately assess the null hypothesis.

### **Organizational Changes**

In the previous section, I discussed the quantitative analysis of the data that were provided to me by the ABPS District. The data does not represent the population from DE Middle School, therefore, I did not use the quantitative data when analyzing the AS-IS and TO-BE of the AVID program at DE Middle School. The quantitative data serves

only as a tool to try to substantiate AVID's claims in the 2017 AVID Handbook that students exposed to the AVID curriculum at the secondary school level "become more academically successful students" (p. 7). I used the qualitative data collected in the form of district approved surveys and interviews to create the past, present, and future of the AVID program at DE Middle School. The existing condition at DE Middle School is broken into four areas: context, culture, condition, and competencies. The connecting question is why the current program at DE Middle School has become stagnant while other AVID schools in the county are thriving. The goal is to analyze the qualitative data to determine a problem solution model within the four areas in order to grow the AVID program in such a way to become a national AVID Demonstration School in a 5-year period and an AVID National School of Distinction within a 10-year period of time.

From an organization standpoint, DE Middle School is currently recognized as a Highly Certified AVID site within the HCPS for the past two years. The problem is that the program is not growing in such a manner to support the AB District's vast commitment to AVID as a supplemental education program for the county. AB Public School district now has over 100 schools enrolled in the program and boasts one of the largest AVID contracts in the nation due to the number of elementary, middle, and high schools enrolled in the program. The expectation from the district level is that the AVID programs at each school will continue to grow and enroll more students. I was hired in 2016-2017 to revitalize the stagnant program at DE Middle School and help take the program to the next level, which is Demonstration School Status.



## **Context**

As was mentioned above in the problem statement, the context can be defined by the demographics and history of DE Middle School. The school was started in the fall of 2000 and has its roots tied to the military. The school has earned an “A” grade for 14 consecutive years and remains ranked within the top schools in the state of Florida and the nation. Since 2004, DE Middle School has earned the Florida Department of Education’s 5 Star School Award. Currently, the school serves over 1,400 students. The largest demographic populations served are White at 73.70% and Hispanic at 12.39%.

DE Middle School implemented the AVID Program four years ago in compliance with the district initiative. The school is not a Title I school in the AB Public School District. Much of the population is currently comprised of transient military families due to the geographic closeness of a military base.

The ABPS District serves as home to more than 4,000 military-connected families across the district. To serve the students at DE Middle School, the school provides trained psychologists and social workers with special expertise in providing support services to students and families with ties to the military. Individual and group counseling is offered to help provide emotional, social, and academic support and crisis intervention to students whose parents are involved with the military. In addition, the school utilizes a School Liaison Officer to help families transition from base to base. The Military Child Education Coalition is a non-profit, world-wide organization focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

Because of this military influence, the cultural context of our school and most of our students is one that demands high performance academically with minimal conduct referrals. This military context also lends itself to a very active PTSA (Parent, Teacher, Student Association) and increased family involvement. DE Middle School does not meet the norm demographics for an AVID school because a majority of the population are in the top 25% of peers on state standardized tests. AVID targets those students in the middle and hopes to raise them to a higher quartile. Given the high-performance measures, high expectations set by the parental units, and minimal conduct referrals, there is a lack of understanding for the need of an AVID Program at DE Middle School. The misconception about the AVID curriculum and its place at DE Middle School has led to the lack of faculty, administrative, and community support, causing it to stagnate over the past few years. A previous administrator cut the program from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes due to lack of recruitment and enrollment. The AVID coordinator was also asked to serve as the AVID academic teacher, so the program was cut to only five periods in a school day. The program continued in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes, but enrollment dwindled and average current class size is 15 as of the 2015-2016 school year.

### **Culture**

The issue, as it relates to the culture of the program at DE Middle School, stems from the previous misconception by many stakeholders that the students at DE Middle School, due to their academics, standardized test scores, and parental involvement, do not need the skills taught within the AVID national curriculum. The generalized AVID student profile are first generation college students, students who are socioeconomically underserved in four-year colleges, and low income, average standardized test scores,

minimum of 2.0 GPA's, college potential with support, and a desire and determination to succeed. Over 90% of the students at DE Middle School are in the top 25% of students in their classes academically and on standardized test scores. Our military culture based on the demographics of the families at DEMS, lends itself to educated, traditional family units with parents who have a minimum of one degree from post-secondary education. The average income for the stakeholders in the demographic area surrounding DE Middle School is \$123,000 annually. Post-secondary education is not a suggestion, it is an expectation for most of our students at DE Middle School. For these reasons, the need for an AVID program as part of the academic culture at DE Middle School is misunderstood.

### **Conditions**

The conditions impacting the past, present and future of the AVID program at DE Middle School are the military demographic, the fact that many of our families have been or are currently apart of the military, and ultimately decreased enrollment due to a misconception of the mission of AVID as a district mandated supplemental education program and the needs of DE Middle School. The first condition to be considered is the AS-IS condition of the recruitment and selection process. Ideally, the AVID Essentials 1, 2, and 9 support this area. The goal of the process is to reflect school-wide diversity ultimately leading to the support of underserved students. The status of the program in 2016-2017 when I was hired reflects a relatively inactive Site Team. The AVID Coordinator was the only individual conducting interviews and reviewing applications. Information was not provided to key stakeholders to profile and identify qualified applicants and while data was collected, it was not used to make decisions in the selection process.

The second area related to the AS-IS and TO-BE condition of the AVID program at DE Middle School is focused on the content and resources related to reading and writing. This relates directly to AVID Essentials 5, 6 and 7 written to address the need for students to develop their own voice and provide opportunities for them to learn about themselves in relation to others. While the past AVID Coordinators recognized the need for developing and promoting multiple perspectives in their AVID elective classes, there was inconsistent selection and use of materials provided to students to engage them in expressing their point of view, taking responsibility for social justice, and engaging in community service opportunities.

The last AS-IS area is that of the AVID elective class and resources. This area relates directly to the AVID Essentials 5, 6, and 7. Ultimately, AVID elective teachers should embed cultural skills such as language, learning, and communication styles within the AVID curriculum to appeal to a diverse group of learners. While the AVID Coordinator and instructor embraced and promoted inquiry and collaboration in 2015-2016, it was done without making accommodations or modifications for students with varied learning or linguistic needs. The evidence of this led to projects that did not reflect the diversity in the classroom population.

### **Competencies**

The DE Middle School currently falls in the range of pre-competence to incapacity on the cultural proficiency continuum. The current as-is status of the AVID program at DE Middle School shows a need for growth in three competencies: instruction, systems, and leadership. Instructionally, AVID strategies must be evident in all classrooms at all grade levels. Currently, use of AVID best practices that include

WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading) are sporadically used based on each teacher's individual level of training. AVID training and professional development opportunities are not schoolwide now. Currently, there is a minimal system in place to access cross-curricular evidence to help support the AVID certification process. DE Middle School is currently ranked as a Highly Certified AVID site. Routine use of all 11 AVID Essentials must move to a Level 3 Institutionalized and be maintained for a two-year period in order for DE Middle to be nominated and apply to serve as a National Demonstration School for AVID.

### **Interpretation**

Although the statistical analysis resulted in no statistical significance and no rejection of the null hypothesis for any grade level in any of the categories, there were some interesting findings. When the data was divided, the total number of students in the anonymized data only totaled 134 compared to thousands impacted by AVID in all the schools throughout the AB District. The largest drop is seen between middle school, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and the beginning of high school, 9<sup>th</sup> grade. A probable reason for this drop in enrollment between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades could be the number of students enrolling in more rigorous honors and Advance Placement courses going into their freshman year of high school. Many of the Advance Placement courses require two blocks of time, which diminishes the room for electives within the students' schedules. This supports AVID's philosophy and is an integral part of the certification process for high schools, which states "70% of all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have chosen rigorous, college-prep courses for 9<sup>th</sup> grade" (AVID Handbook, 2017, p. 25). The data show that only 28 of 134 students in AVID in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade continued the AVID elective class in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and 25 of the

students were no longer enrolled. The percentage of students who stayed in AVID was 52.8%, while the percentage of those who did not continue with the elective was 47.1%. The data provided does not specifically track the classes into which the students enrolled. Even if I were to conclude that the 47.1% of the students that left the AVID program between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade year did so in order to take Advanced Placement and college-prep courses, the number still falls short of the 70% outlined in the national certification criteria established for junior and middle high schools. A time-interval study specifically focused on the transition between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade year would need to be done analyzing the number of students that remain in the program and the number that leave and why to substantiate AVID's claim that 70% of the students should be enrolled in college-prep courses going into high school.

Ironically, the few AVID students who did remain in the program from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade were able to maintain almost equal grade point averages and standardized tests scores as their non-AVID counterparts. In the case of the advance placement course, the AVID students actually showed a higher enrollment on a pivot table than the non-AVID students.

It must be noted in relationship to the data, there was no differentiation to gender, race/ethnicity, educational grouping including 504 Plans, Individual Education Plans, Gifted and Talented, rate of absenteeism, or socio-economic status. Further studies need to be conducted using a larger sample of students and taking these variables into consideration to truly determine the academic efficacy of AVID at the middle school level.

For my particular study of the AVID Program at DE Middle School, the results of the quantitative data did not help or hinder the outcomes of the qualitative data supplied by the surveys and interviews. The surveys and interviews were specific to DE Middle School and, therefore, could be used to develop the plan of action and strategies to move the school forward in attaining its goal of becoming an AVID National Demonstration School. The qualitative data painted a picture of the culture, condition, competencies and content by which illustrated a picture of the past, present and future of the program at DE Middle School in AB Public School District. The quantitative data that the district provided to me did not have any specific parameters and, despite asking for a complete class of students averaging over 500 participants, I was given a sample size of less than 150. The inferential statistic I ran did not reject the null hypothesis at any individual grade level from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. AVID founders claim the supplemental education program increases student achievement that is supported by higher grade point averages, higher standardized test scores, and increased enrollment in rigorous and honors level courses. Given that the data was not specific to DE Middle School, this quantitative analysis simply adds to the educational field of study by providing a potential starting point for larger studies looking at the efficacy of AVID as a supplemental educational program at the secondary, middle school level.

### **Judgments**

I used my research and qualitative data to help determine the perceived efficacy of the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School located in the Alpha Bravo Community School District. The goal of my research study was to evaluate the status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School and determine the steps necessary to

move the program from Secondary Certification to School of Distinction Status in the Alpha Bravo District Public School District. I utilized survey data and interviews to determine the past, present and future of the AVID program at DE Middle School. The qualitative data was the backbone for my proposed change leadership action plan and policy change. The longitudinal data, anonymized and provided by the Alpha Bravo Public School District provided a quantitative overview of the efficacy of AVID as a supplemental education program at the middle school level not specific to DE Middle School. This data tracked AVID and non-AVID students from their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year (2012) through their graduation at grade 12 (2017). I analyzed the student performance measures at each individual grade level to investigate AVID's claims to increase student achievement and closing the achievement gap. The categories in the individual grade levels were the FSA (Florida Standard Assessment) specifically the mathematics and English language arts (reading) scaled scores Levels 1-5, enrollment in College Board Advanced Placement classes, as well as honor level classes and GPA's (grade point averages from 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade).

Given the lack of current research about the efficacy of AVID at the middle school level, the rationale and potential significance of my analysis was to gain a snapshot of the effectiveness of the AVID program in any middle school and to provide support or reject the claims that it positively effects academic middle school student achievement, closes the achievement gap among students, increases participation in advanced and honors level courses, thereby successfully preparing students for a post-secondary academic career.



The findings of this study regarding the efficacy of the AVID program at DEMS are mixed. The qualitative data trends in favor of the efficacy of the AVID middle school at DEMS. The survey data and the interview data support a moderately to highly satisfied opinion regarding the current status of the program at DEMS by the following stakeholders: administration, faculty, and counselors. The quantitative analysis via the longitudinal data was not related to DE Middle School directly.

The literature search for this dissertation cited a study that involved ten high schools in which students involved with the AVID supplemental education program outperformed students not involved in AVID on standardized exams (Watt, Powell, Mendiola, Cossio, 2004). In addition, the study cited that these same students had better attendance rates. Unfortunately, the findings from my study differ from the study by Watt et al. (2004).

Another study by Larry and Grace Guthrie (2002) examined AVID and non-AVID students' grade point averages to determine if the AVID participants had a higher GPA than those of their peers. Their findings showed that after 2 years, the AVID students had a significantly higher GPA than those students with only one year of AVID. Although the AVID students in my study-maintained par with the GPA's of their non-AVID counterparts in a comparison chart, there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in any of the t-tests I conducted. This supports the null hypothesis that there is no difference between the two groups; however, the sample size is too small to draw an accurate conclusion. Even though the broad picture does not substantiate AVID Central's claims of increased academic achievement at the middle school level in my quantitative analysis, the qualitative analysis and the perception of the

AVID program is positive at DE Middle School. The teachers see it as a supportive supplemental education program that is comprised of borrowed best practices and cross-curricular learning strategies. Qualitatively, AVID at DE Middle School offers the stakeholders instructional, systemic, and leadership support. Instructionally, it serves as a model of best practices in the classroom through WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading), systemically it provides vertical alignment among the 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades, and AVID offers a scaffold for professional development and leadership opportunities within the community that involves all stakeholders. These qualitative “feel good” qualities provided by AVID and AVID support help to create a positive environment at DE Middle School. This positivity seems to transfer among many of the stakeholders at the school leading to greater group openness, increased motivation, greater collegiality, and higher expectations for all stakeholders at the school. Although I can’t conclude from this that this change in culture from the AVID program at DEMS translates to a positive academic trend, it is creating a schoolwide culture of success, inspiration, and aspirations. I still question if this is specifically due to the AVID curriculum or if any similar “best practices” supplemental education program would have the same initial and lasting effects. A comparison study looking at the cost to benefit ratio of several different programs would need to be run to determine the answer to this question. In the meantime, DE Middle School is perceived by a majority of the stakeholders as a positive school with a growth mindset.

### **Recommendations**

Although there is a myriad of research and articles written about the national AVID program, there is very little data supporting the efficacy of AVID as a

supplemental education program at the middle school level. AVID was originally implemented at the high school level, so this lack of study is understandable. The focus of AVID at its inception was high school academic achievement and college readiness for high school students to help them gain college acceptance. Given the positive qualitative feedback, despite the lack of quantitative support, I hope this study adds to the research and knowledge of the AVID program and its positive effect on the unique middle school population especially in regard to the 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills that seem to be of greater and greater importance. This is supported by the newest MIT application that based on the College Board website, places character above that of academics and standardized test scores.

Further studies need to be conducted regarding the efficacy of AVID at the middle school level to expand the knowledge base and promote AVID as a highly effective in the middle school as it is at the high school level. The study should include a greater sample of students, group comparisons of students, and a larger number of schools in addition to comparison studies and longitudinal studies.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK**

### **Introduction**

AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. It is a program that was started as pedagogy to bridge the learning gap among low-income students at Clairemont High School in San Diego, CA. Mary Swanson founded the program. She had been teaching English at the school since 1970. In 1977, after starting “Project English” and completing her Master’s thesis, Ms. Swanson identified the following key components that became the foundation of AVID as it is currently known. AVID is considered a practice, pedagogy and philosophy that includes a practical, research-based curriculum to meet the needs of individual students. The original eight tenants of the program are designed to prepare students for success in secondary and post-secondary education with a special emphasis on those that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

The AVID program in AB Public School District encompasses over 95 schools, elementary through high school. It is presented as a secondary elective course for students in the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. The focus of the program is to promote college preparedness. Ultimately, the goal of the AVID coordinators and instructors at each institution is to teach learning and behavior skills which lead to academic success, provide intensive academic support via tutorials, create a positive peer group and close the achievement gap to make college accessible to all students. Currently, the AVID Program in AB District is estimated to impact over 9,000 secondary students. The data reported by AB Public School District states that out of the 99.4% of secondary AVID

students, 80% of graduating seniors applied to a 4-year college or university. In addition, 60% of those who applied were accepted to the college or university of their choice.

Through data collection and a systematic evaluation program, a school's participation in the AVID Program in the district can earn one of five possible school ratings: *AVID non-Certified Site*, *AVID Certified Site*, *AVID Highly Certified Site*, *AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction*, or *AVID Demonstration Site*. I serve as the AVID Coordinator at DE Middle School. My school is currently an AVID Highly Certified Site considered Second Degree Certification. There is only one AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction and AVID Demonstration Site located within our district. There are eleven essential nationwide standards that middle and high schools must meet in order to determine site certification.

They are as follows:

1. AVID Student selection focuses on students in the middle with academic potential (2.0-3.5 GPA) who would benefit from AVID support to improve their academic record and begin college preparation.
2. AVID participants (students and staff) must choose to participate.
3. The school must be committed to full implementation of AVID, with the AVID Elective available within the regular academic school day.
4. AVID students must be enrolled in a rigorous course of study that will enable them to meet the requirements for university acceptance.
5. Organization is used to promote academic self-management.
6. A strong, relevant writing and reading curriculum provides a basis for instruction in the AVID Elective class.

7. Inquiry and collaboration are used as a basis for instruction in the AVID classroom.
8. A sufficient number of trained tutors must be available in the AVID class to facilitate student access to rigorous curriculum. Tutors should be students from colleges and universities, and they must be trained to implement the methodologies used in AVID.
9. AVID implementation and student progress must be monitored through the AVID Data System, and results must be analyzed to ensure success.
10. The school or district must identify resources for AVID costs, agree to implement the AVID Essentials and to participate in AVID Certification and commit to ongoing participation in AVID professional learning.
11. An active, interdisciplinary Site Team collaborates on issues of students' access to and success in rigorous college preparatory classes.
12. Using the following eleven essential criteria, the 10-year goal of DE Middle School is to become an AVID Site of Distinction and National Demonstration School.

DE Middle School implemented the AVID Program four years ago in compliance with the district initiative. During the initial introduction of the program, there was wide spread support of the eleven essential elements used to create the program. Although DE Middle School was able to maintain their 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Certification for the past two years, the program became stagnant, causing enrollment and schoolwide support to drop. The change leadership purpose of this project is to utilize the evaluation data to determine why the AVID Program at DE Middle School stagnated and develop a course of action

that will enable the school to earn the highest levels of certifications within a 10-year period.

I was hired by the district in July of 2016 to serve as the AVID Coordinator and AVID Academic Teacher for DE Middle School. After taking the position, I discussed the past, present, and future of the program with the administration. Admittedly, the opinions were unanimous among the principal and three assistant principals that the loss of momentum was due in part to a lack of support from the administration at the school. The faculty opinion was mixed. Based on the demographics and test scores of the student population at DE Middle School, and a misconception of the mission and purpose of AVID, the overarching question by 60% of the faculty was “why DEMS?” It was evident that the administration and faculty did not see a need for the program at our school. The misconception was that AVID was a grade recovery supplemental education program to be utilized to help failing students meet the minimum requirements to pass through the middle school grades to earn admittance into high school.

Despite this misconception and faltering interest by the administration and faculty, the former coordinator was able to earn and maintain the school’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Certification. In response to the past misconceptions and to prepare us for the future, I developed a change plan with the support of the administration. The 10-year goal is to grow the attendance in the AVID elective classes, create meaningful professional development to help support the use of AVID best practices schoolwide, expand faculty support, and expand the curriculum to include our 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at DE Middle School in order to earn further district, state, and national recognition. I have been hired to spearhead this endeavor.

The baseline exploratory question for changing the program at DE Middle school is why has the AVID Program at DEMS stagnated while other schools in the ABPS District with a lower socio-economic demographic have flourished and become AVID Demonstration Schools and Schools of Distinction. The goal established by AVID National is to become like FGH in Florida. All the elementary, middle, and high schools in FGH School District are registered AVID schools. Ultimately, we need to change, modify, and plan to alter the image of the AVID program at DE Middle School to revitalize the program and meet the national certification requirements to become a Demonstration School and School of Distinction in the AB Public School District.

### **Review of Literature Related to Change**

AVID's nationally stated mission is to "close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society" (AVID Center online, 2009). AVID at the elementary, middle, and high school levels stresses the need for acceleration not remediation. There are 11 key elements or essentials associated with the national AVID program. While not every student will respond to all 11 essentials, it is expected that each student will respond positively to the AVID components individualized to meet the learning needs of that child. As a supplemental education program, AVID relates to Guthrie's theory of the law of contiguity (Guthrie, 1994). Based on Hergenhahn (1976), this theory was established in 1952 and is as relevant to education today as it was years ago. The theory of contiguity is related to Aristotle's law of association, which illustrates the importance of sensory stimulus and experiences as the foundation of all learning.



Guthrie's law of contiguity states that learning is based on a stimulus-response association and learned behavior is a series of movements associated with a selectively small portion of the stimuli confronting an organism (Hergenhahn, 1976). AVID's WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading) strategies are based on repetitive actions or movements designed to support the principle of postremity, which theorizes the more cues given for a particular stimulus will result in a higher chance of a desired response. In addition, Guthrie believed that the ideal environment for learning is one that allows for "freedom of responsible action" (Guthrie & Powers, 1950). AVID national curriculum at all levels lends itself to flexible and adaptable instruction that can be modified to augment the students' prior knowledge, rates of learning and life experiences, and promote self-reliance. Hattie supports this educational theory according to *Visible Learning for Teachers* (Hattie, 2012). In addition, Hattie states the need for goal setting as an effective method for learning and retaining material in the same source. AVID standards are established in such a way to create clear objectives for learning by targeting specific responses to precise educational stimulus (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2009). As a supplemental education program, AVID brings these changes to already existing curriculums in hopes to improve individual student learning and success.

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI, 1993) supports that curriculum should be designed in such a way to enhance academic performance. The essential elements for success as identified by the OERI are the use of experienced professionals who are committed to providing forward motion through the curriculum and promoting academic opportunities beyond high school. There is an expectation of continuous mentoring and tutoring element to provide individualized attention and

encouragement for success. Finally, the involvement of all stakeholders in the community must be present to serve as a support for each individual learner (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1993).

In support of AVID programming at in the elementary and middle grades, preventative measures are far more cost effective than late onset interventions. Blyth (1991) supports this by reporting that the dollars spent on early education supplemental programming brings a saving of three to six dollars in the long-term. In the article, he goes on to state that even a high school graduate who does not go to college will earn approximately \$260,000 more than a student who has chosen to drop out of school. In conclusion, Blyth estimated the lost national income per students due to dropping out of school before graduating from high school as \$360,000.

Given these statistics, supplemental education programs must be implemented before high school in order to prevent students from choosing to drop out of the education system. AVID's curriculum targets students with a constructive curriculum to encourage them to stay in school and continue to higher educations. Cavazos (1989) affirms this conclusion in his summary on follow-up studies of school aged children enrolled in the Head Start program. He drew the conclusion that success in primary and middle school will ultimately lead to success and completion in high school and admittance to post-secondary education.

Early in the paper, I discussed the fragility of the adolescent mind. The Massachusetts Advocacy Center (1988) states the need for school districts to implement supplemental education programs that inspire the at-risk group of middle school students to reach their potential and continue to post-secondary education. The Massachusetts

Advocacy Center believes the middle school group is especially susceptible to the dangers of peer pressure. Ironically, they discuss the fact that retention in the middle grades is not as concerning as it is at the high school level given that the teachers are often more attentive to the individual needs of the students and specifically targeting their individual academic achievement. Supplemental education programs at the middle school level matter because high school counts. Manning (1990) supports the Massachusetts Advocacy Center's findings and explains that middle grade students, regardless of demographics, struggle with at-risk conditions such as low achievement, poverty, criminal behaviors, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse. The necessity for supplemental education programs at this level is essential for improving social skills, developing a positive self-concept, creating prevention teams by involving all stakeholders in the development of goals and objectives to ensure success. Manning (1990) asserts a direct relationship between motivation and success. Programs at this level must be comprehensive since adolescents from the ages of 10-14 often experience multiple developmental changes simultaneously (Price & Swanson, 1990).

Speaking directly to the efficacy of the AVID program as a supplemental education program, Mehan (1992) conducted a study with 144 AVID program graduates from the classes of 1990 and 1991. He reported that 50% of these students were actually enrolled in four-year colleges compared to the local average of 38% for four-year college enrollment. The national average Mehan reported in his study was 39%. In conclusion, Mehan asserted that the students grouped in the AVID program were more academically successful due to the benefits of the supplemental program than their counterparts not involved in the program.

Swanson (1992) states that if the AVID program is to be successful, the essential components including student selection, cooperative learning, parental involvement, and implementation of a functional curriculum are essential. Guthrie and Guthrie (2002b) add to these essentials, indicating that adult student, parental, and peer mentoring and tutoring are necessary to support the success of supplemental educational programs such as AVID. Guthrie and David (1994) state that student selection is absolutely for the success of the program. Successful student selection requires that all stakeholders are informed and involved in the student selection process. These stakeholders should include administrators, teachers, the AVID instructors, and guidance counselors. In addition, Guthrie and David (1994) assert the national criteria for selection should be carefully followed. Although AVID is a supplemental education program, the purpose is not grade recovery. Academically poor performing students who do not meet the nationally established expectations should not be admitted to the program. AVID targets students who are in the middle and have motivation and potential to succeed academically. It is also essential enrollment in AVID is voluntary and students are ready to make a commitment to the program. Students should have the freedom of programming to choose the elective rather than simply being scheduled into the classes.

The involvement of stakeholders, as mentioned above, is extremely important to the success of the program, specifically the involvement of families. While there have been many studies linking the role of parent participation directly to student achievement, Henderson (1988) discovered that children whose parents were actively involved had better grades, higher standardized test scores, and generally had better long-term academic achievement and overall positive attitude. Rich (1985) goes on to support his

claim in his study linking the use of parents as tutors directly to positive changes in the student's I.Q. scores.

Davies (1991) outlines a shift in the paradigm of parental involvement and a change in the nature of families in our community. Davies discovered a shift from parent focus to family focus, the family unit to the new community agency unit, eager parents to the new paradigm of hard-to-reach parents, emphasis on family units to support the child to that of the teachers and administrators providing the key supporting roles. Davies asserts nontraditional family units are far more prevalent now than they were in the 1950's and finds that these nontraditional family units are effective. Regardless of the family unit, research claims that healthy adolescent development is a direct result of close ties between parents and their adolescents. Cutright (1989) asserts the best relationship between adolescents and their parents is one that is warm, acknowledges the teen's need for independence, yet demands good behavior and hard work. To foster this relationship between adolescents and their parents, Hollifield (1994) suggests it is imperative that middle schools involve parents in their children's education. Ironically, his research shows no difference in a parent's desire to be involved and help their children succeed in school based on socio-economic status. Regardless of demographic, Griffith (1996) claims that increased parent participation leads to positive attitudes and behaviors, quality parent-teacher interactions and overall increased academic achievement. Supplemental educational programs such as AVID that foster community interaction and outreach are extremely beneficial especially at the middle school level.

AVID is considered a functional curriculum. The term functional curriculum refers to the teaching of basic academic and executive function skills by means of

professionals throughout the community, field trips, and problem-solving activities stressing Costa's higher order levels of questioning. According to Guthrie (1994), AVID is a supplemental education program that offers a multi-layered curriculum including organizational and study skills, college and career activities and subject area support. In addition, AVID supports the 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills by teaching socialization and communication skills. The goal is to empower students to become self-sufficient and facilitate their own learning.

In this chapter, the researched information included an examination of Guthrie's law of contiguity as it relates to the AVID teaching and learning model. The development and use of supplemental education programs to support the academic, social and psychological needs of students, especially those in the high-risk middle school age group. The necessity for the involvement of all stakeholders for the success of the child. The economic impact of early prevention rather than intervention. Discussion of AVID as a functional curriculum that meets the needs of the changing societal paradigm to help children become self-advocating, independent learners.

### **Envisioning the Success TO-BE**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the AVID Cultural Proficiency Continuum as it relates to the vision for the AVID program at DE Middle School in AB Public School District. I will be analyzing where we are, reviewing descriptions of successful practices and projecting goals and planning for where we the program should be within 10 years. For ease of understanding, I have used the AVID essentials as a guide to define where the program is to be within the timeframe. The following discussions will be broken into categories that are defined as essential by AVID's founder Mary Swanson

and serve as the backbone of the program. The categories are Recruitment and Selection Process, Content and Resources (related to writing and reading), Expectations and Rigor, AVID Elective Class Content and Resources (related to Inquiry and Collaboration). The goal of this chapter is to provide a solution to the question as to why the DE Middle School's AVID program stagnated while others are flourishing in the district, and ultimately provide an action plan for the school to become an AVID Demonstration School and, eventually, an AVID school of Distinction.

### **Contexts**

As was mentioned above in the problem statement, the context can be defined by the demographics and history of DE Middle School. The context for the AS-IS and TO-BE charts for the DE Middle School AVID program remain the same, as the demographic has not changed within the past 4 years. The school was started in the fall of 2000 and has its roots tied to the military.

The ABS School District serves as home to more than 4,000 military-connected families across the district. To serve the students at DE Middle School, the school still provides trained psychologists and social workers with special expertise in providing support services to students and families with ties to the military. Individual and group counseling is offered to help provide emotional, social, academic support and crisis intervention to students whose parents are involved with the military. In addition, the school utilizes a School Liaison Officer to help families transition from base to base. Then Military Child Education Coalition is a non-profit, world-wide organization focused on ensuring quality educational opportunities for all military children affected by mobility, family separation, and transition.

Because of this military influence, the cultural context of our school and most of our students is one that demands high performance academically with minimal conduct referrals. This military context also lends itself to a very active PTSA (Parent, Teacher, Student Association) and increased family involvement. DE Middle School does not meet the norm demographics for an AVID school because a majority of the population are in the top 25% of peers on state standardized tests. AVID targets those students in the middle and hopes to raise them to a higher quartile. Given the high-performance measures, high expectations set by the parental units, and minimal conduct referrals there is a lack of understanding for the need of an AVID Program at DE Middle School. The misconception about the AVID curriculum and its place at DE Middle School led to the lack of faculty, administrative and community support causing it to stagnate over the past few years. A previous administrator cut the program from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes due to lack of recruitment and enrollment. The AVID coordinator was also asked to serve as the AVID academic teacher, so the program was cut to only five periods in a school day. The program continued in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes, but enrollment dwindled and average class size was 15. I was hired in 2016-2017 school year to revitalize and grow the program. Although the demographics and the military backbone of our school culture has not changed, I have created a plan with the help of my faculty and administration to redefine the image of the AVID program at DE Middle School. The faculty, administration, and district are onboard with my plan to make DE Middle School the second AVID Demonstration School in the district at the end of 5 years. In addition, the long-term goal is to become an AVID School of Distinction within a 10 year period.



## **Culture**

For this portion of the paper, discussing the culture as it relates to the context of the DE Middle School environment provided in the first paragraph, I am going to define the term stakeholders as any adult in the school community that has a personal stake in supporting student success. The issue, as it relates to the culture of the program at DE Middle School, stems from the previous misconception by all stakeholders that our students, due to their academics, standardized test scores, and parental involvement, do not need the skills taught within the AVID national curriculum. The generalized AVID student profile are first generation college students, students who are socioeconomically underserved in four-year colleges, and low income, average standardized test scores, minimum of 2.0 GPA's, college potential with support and a desire and determination to succeed. Over 90% of the students at DE Middle School are in the top 25% of students in their classes academically and on standardized test scores. Our military context lends itself to educated, traditional family units with parents who have a minimum of one degree from post-secondary education. The average income for the stakeholders in the demographic area surrounding DE Middle School is \$123,000 annually. Post-secondary education is not a suggestion it is an expectation for most of our students at DE Middle School. For these reasons, the need for an AVID program as part of the academic culture at DE Middle School was misunderstood.

As with most new program initiatives, when then the district mandated that DE Middle School was to begin the AVID program, the novelty of a new supplemental education program peaked the faculty curiosity. The previous administration supported the directive of the district officials. The initial administrative support moved the

program forward. The program encompassed the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes. The original AVID Coordinator recruited faculty members that doubled as AVID subject area teachers as well as teaching their own subject areas. A team of individuals volunteered to serve as the DE Middle School AVID Site Team and helped to develop plans for each of the 11 essentials (mentioned earlier in the paper) in order to gain satisfactory and, eventually, Second Degree Certification as an AVID school. The program gained momentum during the first two years of implementation under the leadership of the initial AVID coordinator.

Unfortunately, the foundational leader moved into an administrative position at another site and other AVID coordinators were brought in to run the program over the next two years. At the same time, the DE Middle School went through a change in administration. This change in administrative leadership and program leadership created the perfect storm. While the program was able to sustain its earned Secondary Certification per AVID National, interest, enrollment, and stakeholder support began to dwindle. The program was dropped from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade due to lack of enrollment, and the class sizes for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes dropped almost 20%. AVID was no longer providing a value-added benefit to the core area courses. The faculty and guidance counselors viewed it as simply “another elective,” and the screening profile and recruitment efforts became minimal. Faculty and administration no longer wanted to participate in AVID professional development or AVID Summer Institute. This was such an issue that the administrator had to virtually “beg” teachers to attend the AVID programs in order that the school could maintain its Secondary Degree Certification status.

It must also be noted that there was a lack of financial support for the DE Middle School AVID Program. DE Middle School is not a Title I school. Any funding for programs to build the AVID program had to be supported by the coordinator and the school. Other programs that were more visible to the stakeholders at DE Middle School took monetary priority. While the program was not failing, culturally, it was stagnant. This stagnation and seeming lack of stakeholder interest led to the resignation of the last AVID coordinator who was also serving as the only AVID academic teacher. 2015-2016 I was hired to serve as the new AVID Coordinator and AVID Academic teacher. The increase in enrollment, extracurricular programming, and revitalized interest in the program by the stakeholders will be addressed in the following paragraphs. Thanks to renewed support by the administration and a growth mindset, the mid and long-term goals for the AVID program at DE Middle School are slowly changing the image of the program which is leading to a positive change in the culture of the school.

### **Conditions**

The AS-IS conditions of the AVID program at DE Middle School will be broken into the categories outlined in the introductory paragraph. The first condition to be considered is the AS-IS condition of the Recruitment and Selection Process. Ideally, the AVID Essentials 1, 2 and 9 support this area. The goal of the process is to reflect school-wide diversity ultimately leading to the support of underserved students. The status of the program when I was hired in 2016-2017 reflected a relatively inactive site team. The AVID coordinator was the only individual conducting interviews and reviewing applications. Information was not provided to key stakeholders to profile and identify qualified applicants, and while data was collected, it was not used to make decisions in

the selection process. Currently, we have moved to a level of competence given that the stakeholders are actively involved in the recruitment and interview process. The faculty, administration, site team, and tutors are an integral part of analyzing the written and oral portions of the AVID application process to help determine each individual's presence, communication style, and learning style for a fit in the AVID program. The qualitative data collected by the stakeholders is compared to the quantitative data collected from each student in the form of GPA's, standardized test scores, Individual Education Plans, 504 Plans and behavioral trackers. In addition, the site team works closely with the guidance counselors to ensure proper placement by providing an AVID student profile as a guide.

The second area related to the AS-IS and TO-BE condition of the AVID program at DE Middle School is focused on the Content and Resources related to reading and writing. This relates directly to AVID Essentials 5, 6, and 7 written to address the need for students to develop their own voice and provide opportunities for them to learn about themselves in relation to others. While past AVID coordinators recognized the need for developing and promoting multiple perspectives in their AVID elective classes, there was inconsistent selection and use of materials provided to students to engage them in expressing their point of view, taking responsibility for social justice, and engaging in community service opportunities. Currently, the site team and other stakeholders help to co-create and pre-plan cross-curricular resources to promote a growth mind set and multiple perspectives. These resources are utilized in all content areas and serve as the foundation for robust discussions in the form of Socratic Seminars to promote a respect for diverse perspectives.

The previous TO-BE condition related to Expectations and Rigor was that the AVID coordinator and elective teacher would understand the need of each student and individualize instruction based on the guidelines outlined in the Individual Education Plan or 504 Plan. These are federal documents and all certified teachers must adhere to the accommodations and modifications outlined by the case managers on these forms. AVID students should have access to rigorous courses at all levels. The AVID coordinator must work with the stakeholders to ensure that the AVID students are consistently and appropriately being academically challenged. Currently, the site team works with the all stakeholders, including students, to ensure that all AVID students participate in rigorous content aligned with individual learning capabilities. The goal is to ensure that all students meet the minimum requirements for university enrollment and completion of college.

The last AS-IS area is that of the AVID Elective Class and Resources. This area relates directly to the AVID Essentials 5, 6, and 7. Ultimately, AVID elective teachers should embed cultural skills such as language, learning, and communication styles within the AVID curriculum to appeal to a diverse group of learners. While the AVID coordinator and instructor embraced and promoted inquiry and collaboration, it was done without making accommodations or modifications for students with varied learning, or linguistic needs. The evidence of this lead to projects that did not reflect the diversity in the classroom population. Currently, thanks to the involvement of the stakeholders, we are able to provide the AVID students at DE Middle School with diverse perspectives. The hope is that these opportunities will enhance learning, provide motivation, increase

performance and ultimately narrow the achievement gap between and among student groups. This is AVID's national mission.

### **Competencies**

As the DE Middle School strives to improve, we must assess where we are, review successful and best practices and plan for the future. On the cultural proficiency continuum, the AS-IS is currently in the range of pre-competence falling to incapacity. In order to meet the mid and long-term range goals of moving the DE Middle School into a National AVID Demonstration School status, there is a plan to become Proficient in all the areas defined in the paragraphs above. Proficiency in all of these key areas will lead to AVID strategies being utilized schoolwide in all subject areas. The executive functioning, organizational, and study skills that are part of the national AVID curriculum will be utilized and supported in all courses. This TO-BE model raises the DE Middle School's certification to a Level 3 (Institutionalized) in all 11 AVID Essentials which is necessary in order to become an AVID Demonstration School and eventual AVID National School of Distinction.

### **Conclusion**

The last chapter defined the content, culture, condition, and competencies of the AVID Program at DE Middle School as it is and what it is to become. Currently, DEMS holds a Secondary Degree Certification, but falls short of the Demonstration School Status based on the score established by the 11 AVID Essentials. The AS-IS data collected from the AVID Certification process reports DE Middle School at the following levels for the 11 AVID Essential: Essential 1-Level 3, Essential 2-Level 2, Essential 3-

Level 3, Essential 4-Level 3, Essential 5-Level 2, Essential 6-Level 2, Essential 7-Level 3, Essential 8-Level 1, Essential 9-Level 2, Essential 10- Level 2, Essential 11-Level 2.

The definition of the AVID Essentials are defined at the beginning of the paper. In order to meet the established TO-BE goal of becoming an AVID Demonstration School, the AVID program at DE Middle School must attain a level 3 in all of the AVID Essentials. The next chapter will discuss the current plan to help the school reach their goal.

## **CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

### **Introduction**

The goal for the DE Middle School in the AB Public School District is to become an AVID Demonstration School within a 5-year period and an AVID National School of Distinction within 10 years. Currently, DE Middle School is a Highly Certified AVID Site. In order to meet the mid and long-term range goals, there must be a commitment on behalf of all the stakeholders, as defined in the previous chapter, to choose to take AVID practices schoolwide. The reason, as determined by the core members of the DEMS AVID site team, AVID at our school motivates, organizes, pushes, develops, excites and supports teachers and students so that every person can recognize their individual potential and achieve individual success. The next paragraphs outline the strategies and actions that must be taken to allow us to meet our goals.

### **Strategies and Actions**

The first area for review and improvement in the DE Middle School's AVID Program deals specifically with AVID Essential 2 subsection 4. AVID Essential 2 deals specifically with the AVID Program participants including students and staff. Subsection 4 deals directly with the recruitment and development of AVID elective teachers. Currently, I serve as both the AVID coordinator and the AVID elective teacher. Early in the history of the program at DE Middle School, the AVID program had a coordinator and 2 additional AVID elective teachers. As the program lost momentum and enrollment dwindled, the administration, understandably, cut the teaching units. Currently, we are at Meets Certification Level (1). To meet our goal, we need to be Institutionalized Level (3)



and provide documentation and a long-term plan and process for identifying and selecting AVID elective class teachers.

We have developed an action plan and divided it in the following domains in alignment with the national AVID certification program to assist DE Middle School in attaining their 5-year and Domain 1 is AVID Schoolwide Instruction (WICOR- writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, reading strategies), Domain 2 is AVID Schoolwide Systems divided into management of the of AVID elective, access to rigorous courses and student support, assessment of student progress and data collection. Domain 3 is AVID Schoolwide Leadership which includes development of a college readiness mission and vision, representative governance throughout the school and strategic college readiness planning. The last Domain 4 is AVID Schoolwide Culture, which includes rigor in all subject area courses, community activities and college awareness, and promotion of a college-going environment.

In response to a strategy to improve item 2.4 in the previous paragraphs, the action plan falls into Domain 3. It is imperative that the stakeholders understand the mission and vision of the AVID program. Based on the qualitative data I collected, stagnation of the program at DE Middle School stems partially from a misconception that AVID was to serve as a grade recovery program for failing students. Using national AVID professional development opportunities by the AB Public School District, enrolling faculty members in myAVID.org, and professional development offered through DE Middle School in the form of monthly Flap Jack Fridays and Monday Teacher University sessions, the action plan is to ensure the college readiness mission of

AVID is clearly communicated to all stakeholders. The stakeholders are currently developing an AVID webpage to be featured on the DE Middle School website.

The strategy and action plan to improve the AVID essential 2.6 relating to the development of schoolwide involvement of policy review and development is currently in place for the 2017-2018 school year. Currently, 50% of the Internal Leadership Team is part of the AVID Site Team. We are continuing to build the members of the site team and encourage their participation on the internal leadership team. Fortunately, as a step in the right direction, the administration opened the internal leadership meetings to all faculty members. To participate, faculty simply had to commit to consistently being at the monthly meetings. Last year, the administration selected the Internal Leadership Committee. This change of strategy definitely is breaking down barriers and giving stakeholders access and a voice in the representative governance of the DE Middle School. Google Docs and Office 365 are being used to connect and involve all stakeholders in the community when their schedules do not allow them to be present at the meetings.

An action plan in response to AVID Essential 3.2 is needed to take our current Routine Use level (2) to an Institutionalization Level (3). Currently, we have one section of AVID elective courses that span the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades at DE Middle School. Unfortunately, at the onset of the program AVID at DE Middle School spanned all grade levels including 6<sup>th</sup> grade. To meet the new goal, we need to create an action plan to have 70% of the students enrolled for two or more years in the program. As enrollment in the program diminished, the administration cut the teaching units as was mandated by the district. The strategy we are using to meet the need can be found in Domain 2 AVID

as a schoolwide system. The first step is to train more of the faculty to serve as AVID Elective teachers through national AVID training during the winter and summer AVID Institutes. This past summer, eight new faculty members representing every subject area volunteered to go for training. In addition, these trained faculty members developed professional development sessions that are presented monthly to educate the faculty regarding AVID WICOR strategies in each of the core subject areas. These individuals are also taking an active role in recruiting and screening new students for the program, serving as voluntary tutors during our tutorials in order that we meet the 7:1 student teacher ratio for Demonstration Status. In addition, they are key members of the DE Middle School site team and are using their individual subject area data to ensure grade level vertical and horizontal articulation and access to rigorous courses. As a team, we are compiling this data and sharing it with the guidance counselors for screening purposes and to ensure we are not missing any students that meet the national AVID criteria.

Our current status for Essential 5.3 which necessitates the need of schoolwide implementation of AVID time management and organizational strategies in the form of binders and agenda is a Routine Use Level (2). The AVID students are required to strategically use agendas, calendars, and planners to backward map projects, create to-do lists and prioritize tasks to promote self-management. Ideally, the students should be utilizing these time management techniques in all of their classes and extracurricular activities. The DE Middle School action response is all students, regardless of their enrollment in AVID, are provided an agenda for the year. The 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams require that the students use these agendas to help track the work that needs to be done in

each class. The DE Middle School, during the first year of implementation, the AVID coordinator and the site team mandated that all students in the school carry a 3-ring binder that included sections for all subject areas. This lasted only one year and failed due to stakeholder support. The current plan of action is to incorporate the widespread use of interactive notebooks and AVID binder system together. Currently, science, mathematics, and history utilize interactive notebooks to help students organize their assignments and organize their time. The components of these interactive notebooks consist of a running table of contents, learning logs, notes, handouts, and all graded work. These are the same components of the AVID binder system. The difference is the notebooks are maintained in the classroom. We are currently developing a plan to allow the students to utilize the notes from the notebooks to follow the Cornell Learning Process, 10/24/7 (10-minute review each day for 7 days) to minimize the curve of forgetfulness (Learning Strategies Center, 2001). To accommodate the input from all stakeholders, DE Middle School is moving to maintain the portfolio type notebooks digitally utilizing One Note. Professional Development classes are being offered during our monthly Teacher University to educate the faculty about the use of One Note in their classrooms. Subject area leads are working with their teams to support this effort during their common planning time.

Based on our national evaluation from last year, the greatest area of need for DE Middle School involved AVID Essential 6 subcategories 1, 3 and 4. AVID Essential 6 focuses on a strong, relevant reading curriculum utilized schoolwide. DE Middle School is ranked at a Routine Use Level (2) for the subcategories listed above. Subcategory 1 addresses the need for students in the AVID Elective classes to receive instruction in

writing-to-learn strategies as part of the year-long curriculum. Ideally, to reach a Level (3) these strategies should be used in all core area courses. As a tool for the writing-to-learn strategies, the students should be using Cornell Notes (Learning Strategies Center, 2001) in all academic courses, not just the AVID Elective classes. These notes should include summaries and learning logs, to assist the students in organizing their thoughts and to serve as study guides for each of their classes. DE Middle School was ranked at a Routine Use Level (2) in both subcategories 3 and 4. In response to the need to improve in this area to attain Demonstration School Status, the following goals have been established for the 2017-2018 school year. WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading) strategies are being taught in month professional development forums with a focus on expanding and specifying the write-to-learn for all subject areas. In addition, all classes are being requested to utilize the Cornell note taking strategies. Thanks to the support of the administration, DE Middle School hosted a director from AVID's South Eastern Division for Teacher University at the beginning of the year. All faculty members participated in a hands-on professional development session to explore, explain and elaborate the use of the Cornell System in all content areas. As part of the Cornell System, teachers were shown the benefit of the learning logs and were equipped with rubrics to help evaluate the use of these tools.

AVID Essential 8 addresses the need for a sufficient number of tutors for the biweekly AVID Tutorials. The role of the tutors is to mentor students and facilitate the 10-step tutorial process. They serve as additional teachers and coaches and should be in a 7:1 student-teacher ratio for the highest level of certification. DE Middle School is currently at a Routine Use Level (2) in subcategories 3 and 5. In response to 8.3, the

AVID site team and administration helped develop the recruitment plan and advertisement based on the student needs at our school. DEMS hired two tutors for the 2017-2018 school year. The district currently mandates that each school only have two tutors based on budgetary restrictions of the district. To meet the goal, faculty stakeholders have agreed to utilize some of their personal planning time to assist students in the AVID tutorials. The subject area faculty routinely rotate into the AVID classroom to mentor and coach the students in each subject area. Administrative response has been positive and the teachers are offered comp-time for their efforts to assist the students the tutorials. With the help of the faculty and the two hired tutors, we are meeting the 7:1 ratio in 4 out of the 5 classes.

National AVID Demonstration School Status requires that 100% of the stakeholders (faculty and administration) attend AVID Summer Institute Trainings. This goal is highlighted in AVID Essential 10 and feeds directly in to AVID Essential 11 to create an interdisciplinary AVID site team. Currently, 65% of the faculty and 100% of the administrators at DE Middle School have attended. The site team is building interest in the training by utilizing the strands from the 2016-2017 Summer Institute during our Monday Professional Development classes. Space is limited at each summer institute, as the district pays for the teachers to attend. The annual learning conference is approximately \$800/person. Last year, 8 teachers, representing all core area subjects, volunteered to attend. They took the lessons and strategies they learned back to their common subject area planning, and we currently have a list of 10 new teachers expressing interest in attending this next summer. The Site Team members would also like to attend to continue their training.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion and in response to the question as to how to revitalize and grow the AVID program at DE Middle School to attain Demonstration School Status, each of the action areas can be further broken into content, culture, competencies, and conditions present in the AS-IS and TO-BE charts discussed earlier in the paper. The following summary of the instructional strategies developed by the stakeholders support the content. The action plan is to focus writing-to-learn (WICOR) strategies in all subject areas. Themes and ideas for the strategies will be shared school wide utilizing OneNote and Office 365, which allow for collaboration and sharing of documents. The college readiness mission and vision for the AVID program will be broadcast to all stakeholders via the use of the DE Middle School website, AVID classes are now part of the district initiative Project Innovate, and we will help create e-binders and portfolio systems using the interdisciplinary One Note platform. Professional development is in place to focus on schoolwide implementation of the Cornell Note System school-wide. To support the content, COSTA's Level Questioning and WICOR Strategy charts will be visible in each classroom. Ghost Walks and Peer Mentoring are now part of the Monday Professional Development series to allow faculty members to share best practices and create a unified message and environment for all students. Teacher University will continue to include national AVID staff members to present hands-on training for all faculty at DE Middle School.

Improvement as related to the systems strategies put in place to all DE Middle School to position the school as an AVID Demonstration School. The site team will continue to work with all stakeholders to recommend and recruit students for the AVID

Elective classes. Continued partnerships with local colleges, high schools will be maintained to grow the program. In addition, faculty members will volunteer their time to assist with biweekly AVID tutorials to maintain the 7:1 student teacher ratio in all AVID classes. Flap Jack Fridays, surveys published using OneNote and Office 365 platforms and professional development will be utilized to build site team involvement and attract future AVID elective teachers. Site team members will actively recruit new faculty members to join us for the AVID Summer Institute 2018.

The competencies can be defined as the leadership strategies. With the support of the administration, AVID site team members and the AVID coordinator will be directly involved with the internal Team at DE Middle School. The new certification process outlined by AVID National to be implemented during the 2017-2018 school year will be aligned directly with the teacher evaluation system of AB Public School District. Programs and community outreach opportunities will be made available to stakeholders to teach AVID strategies and share the mission of AVID. We will continue to develop communication with guidance counselors and bilingual paras to ensure equity to rigor and placement in the AVID Elective.

The current AVID site team developed the following initiatives to help build AVID schoolwide in order that DE Middle School can earn Demonstration School Status in the next 5 years. AVID will partner with local colleges and school organizations to promote community service and college readiness opportunities for the students at DEMS. Seeds of Hope, PTSA (Parent, Teacher, Student Association), SGA (Student Government Association), NJHS (National Junior Honor Society) have agreed to partner with the AVID program at our school. To promote a culture of individualized instruction



and expand classroom content to the 21<sup>st</sup> century soft skills, the faculty is engaged in a book study utilizing the book *Unselfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in our All-About-Me World* by Michele Borba (2017). This study supports the AVID curriculum by addressing the whole child and what is known as the Four C's of Learning: critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity. AVID curriculum stresses these 4C's as a necessary part of the college preparedness process. In addition, 100% of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at DE Middle School will take the PSAT test and have College Board accounts linked to their individual Khan Academy Accounts. Lastly, to promote a schoolwide culture of college readiness, the AVID program is partnering with the DEMS Art Department to create a College Walk of Fame, which has already been approved by the administration. Although DE Middle School does not have a large population of first generation college students, our goal is to create a college-bound message to our students, T2M4 (Technical, 2 Year, Military, 4 Year). Using these strategies and actions, together we will achieve AVID National Demonstration School status within 5 years and AVID National School of Distinction within a 10-year period.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is offered as an academic elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Currently, AB Public School District has elementary, middle, and high school AVID programs. Although not all the schools in the district are involved, there are currently over 100 AVID schools in the district. AVID students at all grade levels receive instruction utilizing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum provided by AVID Center, tutor-facilitated study groups, motivational activities, and academic success skills. Students participate in grade appropriate activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, and reading to support their academic growth.

Currently, DE Middle School offers the AVID program to only the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at our school. To meet the certification criteria to become an AVID Demonstration School, I am recommending a policy change to incorporate a full one-year course into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The following chapter is dedicated to the needs analysis related to this policy change to include the educational, economic, social, political, and legal implications of implementing AVID into the DEMS 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.

### **Policy Statement**

When the program was initiated at DE Middle School, the AVID program was placed on the “wheel.” This year long rotation included four elective classes to expose the students to their choice of classes available in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Given that there is an already established 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum available through AVID Center, I

am recommending a policy change at our school that will add this year long 6<sup>th</sup> grade AVID elective course to the already existing 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum.

The goal of this 6th grade AVID elective course will be to serve as an introduction to the AVID philosophy. Transitional elementary to middle grade students will develop knowledge of the connection between goals and academic success. The curriculum focuses on building self-confidence, communication skills, and collaboration. Utilizing WICOR strategies, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at DE Middle will be exposed to introductory reading strategies to help them build vocabulary and an understanding a variety of texts. The course will also focus on prewriting techniques, summary writing and structured note-taking in the form of Cornell Notes. The curriculum begins the process of introducing the students to college and career awareness through guest speakers, field trips and research opportunities.

Currently, the AVID program is only available to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders at DE Middle School. Given the need to grow the enrollment to meet the goal of becoming a Demonstration School within the next 5 years, expansion to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes is imperative. Although the site team is actively recruiting and working with the guidance counselors at our school to increase the enrollment in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes, we are missing one third of the entire school population by not including them in our ongoing recruitment efforts. DE Middle School will not be able to obtain 70% student body enrollment without the incorporation of this group of students.

In addition, the district this past year on-boarded over 20 elementary schools as a part of the district's AVID contract. AB District now has elementary, middle, and high schools with active AVID programs. As a potential feeder middle school, DE Middle

must be prepared to meet the individual needs of the students enrolled in the AVID Elementary curriculum. Implementing the change policy to create a 6<sup>th</sup> grade AVID Elective course will provide a seamless transition for the students already exposed to the AVID philosophy. The goal of the policy change, in addition to expanding the enrollment at DE Middle School will be to provide a social and academic scaffold to assist the students in their transition from elementary to secondary education. There have been many studies related to the effects of the transition between the elementary and middle school. Nicholls and Gardner (1999) suggest it is the discontinuity of school cultures that tends to lead to social and emotional discord and lack of academic achievement.

Kvalsund (2000) believe that his is due to the fact that elementary schools offer a vastly different cultural experience due to their relative size and systematic structure. Teacher training, expectations and beliefs appear to be vastly different between the two cultures. Midgley, Feldluaufert and Eccles (1987) asserted the difference between the two groups of teachers was due to the fact that elementary school teachers generally had a more positive image of their students, tended to trust their students more, and needed less disciplinary control in their classrooms. In addition, as students transition to the higher grade levels and move from elementary to secondary education, they report that the courses become more difficult, teachers are stricter than elementary school teachers, and integrating into peer groups is much more difficult. (Anderson et al, 2000)

The program initially incorporated the 6<sup>th</sup> grade at DE Middle School. The AVID elective was placed as part of a rotational wheel to expose incoming students to their elective choices when they reached 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Unfortunately, due to lack of enrollment and stakeholder support mentioned earlier in this paper, the administration cut

the program from the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. The goal of this policy change is to reinstate the program. The following needs analysis will illustrate the benefits of re-introducing the program to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum for DE Middle School and our goal to become a National Demonstration School and, eventually, an AVID School of Distinction.

### **Analysis of Needs**

The following paragraphs will consider the policy change of AVID to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum at DE Middle School from six different disciplinary perspectives, namely, educational, economic, social, political, legal and ethical analysis. The goal of this analysis is to provide evidence that with the commitment of the AB Public School district to AVID and the implementation of AVID in over 20 elementary schools this 2017-2018 school year, expansion of the AVID in our middle schools is not only reasonable, but beneficial. Research shows that there are two key problems that disrupt the transition between elementary and secondary education: “a lack of cross-system alignment of expectations for college readiness and insufficient collaboration on teacher preparation” (McRobbie, 2004). AVID is committed to expanding programs schoolwide to provide solutions for these two key problem areas. For over 30 years, AVID has dedicated itself to developing a system of cross-curricular support for all stakeholders to help raise the expectations of students with the belief that when utilizing the AVID strategies, students will rise to the challenge (AVID.org). AB Public Schools is fully committed to implementing AVID district wide. Currently, this commitment boasts over 100 AVID schools, including elementary, middle, and high schools.

## **Educational Analysis**

From an educational perspective, it is reasonable to question “why AVID” as the supplemental education program. AVID curriculum per AVID Center targets the core of the middle school students, namely, those students who are in the academic middle. AVID’s national curriculum is comprised of best practices and instructional strategies like the Cornell Note System, WICOR, and COSTA’s Higher Order Questioning skills. In addition, the curriculum provides support of the core area courses through the use of tutorials while promoting community stakeholder involvement in the form of guest speakers and field trips. AVID emphasizes teaching strategies in the classroom to promote subject area mastery, understanding and overall improvement. McGee (2003) outlines some of the tools that are prevalent as a part of best teaching practices to help students achieve. Although the article is not directly related to AVID, the strategies are the same: using portfolios to assess student progress, using project-based, collaborative approaches to the curriculum, celebrating effort and improvement formally and informally, and providing relevant, complex and challenging work for students. To support the introduction of AVID into DE Middle School’s 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, Galton, Gray, and Ruddock (2003) found that secondary schools that introduced incoming students to programs that involved study skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving strategies and attempted to boost awareness that all students are life-long learners increased stakeholder enthusiasm regarding attendance. Given that AVID is being implemented at the elementary school level throughout AB Public School District, adding AVID to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum at DE Middle School will serve as social, academic, pedagogical, and physical bridge between the elementary and secondary school cultures.

## **Economic Analysis**

In response to the economic analysis, although I do not have any direct information related to the economic impact of AVID in the AB Public School District, I was able to find a document from 2012 entitled the AVID Central Florida Collaborative. Page 8 of the document outlines the economic cost for implementing the AVID Elective high school and middle school. According to the study, the average cost of implementing the AVID program at the middle school level is \$1,140/AVID elective student. The state takes approximately three years to implement the program fully into a middle school curriculum. The cost includes the school's costs to provide substitutes for district teacher training, the cost of AVID tutors and the cost to attend AVID Summer Institute. It must be noted that these figures are from 2012 and do not take into consideration the rates of inflation from then until now. The document outlines how the costs drop dramatically with each additional year the program is run. The document balances the cost benefit ratio by balancing the monetary output with tangible results to the community economy due to matriculation to post-secondary education, increased tax revenues from college graduates (Baum, Ma & Payea 2010), and the fact that individuals with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed, productive members of society. Overall, the long term economic benefits of having AVID in the secondary schools is directly related to increased high school graduation rates, college matriculation, and college persistence. These costs are offset by the training and development of AVID academic teachers, coordinators, and tutors for the biweekly tutorials for each AVID school. Further study needs to be conducted to determine the true economic cost benefit ratio.

## **Social Analysis**

To address the social benefits of changing the policy at DE Middle School to include AVID in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum, I would like to cite a literature review focused on the transition years conducted by Hargreaves and Earl (1990). In the study, they concluded “the tragedy of transition years is not that students experience anxiety on transfer to secondary school. The tragedy is that this anxiety passes so quickly, and that students adjust so smoothly to the many uncomfortable realities of secondary school life. These realities...can restrict achievement and depress motivation (especially among the less academic) sowing the seeds for drop-out in later years” (p. 214). As mentioned earlier in the paper, this transition to secondary involves a very fragile time in development for adolescence. The adolescent described in the Hargreaves and Earl (1990) study are struggling with self-perception and identity. Moving into the secondary culture, the transitional students are more concerned with being bullied, complicated schedules, not knowing anyone, getting lost and having multiple teachers and the increase in homework (Hill, 2001). It is imperative that schools offer programs to address the social needs of these students prior to entering the 7<sup>th</sup> grade or second year of middle school. As part of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade AVID curriculum, the biweekly AVID tutorials offer students time, camaraderie, and academic scaffolding to navigate these social concerns while providing a proactive, caring environment in which to voice their concerns. In addition, the tutorials offer additional staff support and encourage academic success. Implementing this policy is an innovative way to ensure a socially and academically smooth transition for the core of the students moving from elementary to secondary education.



## **Political Analysis**

The best transition programs bring educators from all levels together to learn about each other's programs and plan cross-system transitional activities (Mizelle & Irvin, 2000). Hertzog & Morgan (1999) corroborate this claim stating the students need a variety of range of activities to help them transition. AVID curriculum offers a vertical systems development plan K-12 that offers a standardized process and tools to ensure alignment, collaborative, project-based learning approach, continued professional development, and age appropriate instruction that integrates relevant, age specific instruction designed to help students synthesize complex ideas. Given the AB Public School District's commitment to their national AVID contract and the DE Middle School goal to become an AVID Demonstration School within a 5-year period, the district has offered full support of our initiative to add a complete year of AVID to the already existing 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum at DEMS. Politically, the district school board and current superintendent are in full support of the AVID growth mindset in district. Further studies would need to be conducted to determine the current support for AVID at the state and national level.

## **Legal Analysis**

Regarding the legal analysis, the benefit of implementing this policy change at DE Middle School is related to increased support of the middle core of students with 504 Plans due to medical diagnoses and Individual Education Plan. Per the NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act, 2000), these documents once drafted become federally mandated. Teachers must adhere to the accommodations and modifications outlined in the plans or be in breach of federal law. AVID strategies such as Cornell Notes, WICOR, peer

tutoring, COSTA's level of questioning and learning methods such as Philosophical Chairs and Socratic Seminars lend themselves well to a majority of the accommodations necessary to scaffold students who are part of the Exceptional Student Education program. AVID ensures that teachers have the tools to meet the federal mandates and individual learning plans outlined in these documents. Currently, 15% of the students enrolled in AVID at DEMS are enrolled in an ESE program.

### **Moral and Ethical Analysis**

In 2003, Weissbourd (2003) conducted a study analyzing the effects of teachers on their students and the impact their leadership had to foster key ethical and emotional qualities in their students. Stakeholders, especially teachers,

influence students' moral development not simply by being good role models—important as that is—but also by what they bring to their relationships with students day to day: their ability to appreciate students' perspectives and to disentangle them from their own, their ability to admit and learn from moral error, their moral energy and idealism, their generosity, and their ability to help students develop moral thinking without shying away from their own moral authority.

(Weissbourd, 2003 p. 55)

The AVID curriculum is a system based on academic and character education focused on building positive habits, encouraging positive behaviors, community service, and developing professional collaborations. Schaps, Schaeffer, & McDonnell (2001) support this type of education asserting that it helps students develop the capacity for moral reasoning. The community environment that must be prevalent in the AVID classroom at all educational levels is guided by the commitment of the AVID elective

teacher to provide opportunities for accomplishment, a non-judgmental listening forum, and consistent modeling of high moral expectations. Students must be empowered and not overpowered in order to raise the level of responsibility to act morally due to intrinsic and not extrinsic motivation (Marshall, 2002).

### **Implications for Staff and Community Relationships**

The overall culture and climate of a school is determined by how everyone within the walls of the community perceives the health of the organization (Haplin & Croft 1963). The school community demands so much of administrators today that programs must be established to promote and facilitate teacher leadership. This concept is supported by Danielson (2007). In her article she states that teacher tenure today is actually longer than that of most principals within the same school community. For this reason, teachers have a great impact on the culture and climate of the school. The policy change I am proposing is one that could be considered a “reculturing” (Fullan, 1999). As stakeholders, we are in the process of capacity building to effect organizational change at DE Middle School. Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) and Watt (2002) identified this process as “avidization” for schools that are striving to implement AVID’s WICOR (writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, reading) strategies cross-curricular and AVID’s college-bound culture schoolwide. This is exactly the intent of the policy change I proposed to create—a complete middle school program to include 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. This policy change will be essential to meet our goal of becoming an AVID Demonstration School within 5 years.

Berry and Bulach (2001) indicate that the implications on the staff and community can be measured in three distinct areas: group openness, group cooperation,

and group atmosphere. Each of these categories involves individual items. Ultimately, the items relate to feelings and beliefs and transmission of these values in a supportive environment. These can further be related to Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland's (2002) collegial leadership, achievement plan in the form of high expectations, attainable goals, and professional behavior leading to a community of cooperation and support. The action plan in place includes continued professional development in the form of AVID Summer Institute, AVID District Leadership Trainings, and college and business collaborations in the form of field trips and guest speakers, which lends itself to the "avidization" of DE Middle School.

In response to the implications of this change of policy to the staff and school community, I discovered a study conducted in 2010 by Karen M. Watt et al. analyzing the effect of AVID's professional development on teachers' perceptions as it relates to school culture and climate. The study of over 3000 teachers concluded that "simply having AVID at a school over an extended period is not a guarantee that improvements in school culture and climate will occur" (Watt et al., 2010, p.177). This is exactly the scenario reported in the qualitative data I collected for this research. Although AVID was implemented at DE Middle School, the effects of the program were short lived and it quickly became stagnant. There were misconceptions regarding the purpose and mission of the program, lack of stakeholder support, and a definite lack of interest any professional development offered to the teachers through AVID Central. As mentioned earlier in paper, I was hired in 2016-2017 as the AVID coordinator to revitalize the program. My first step was to create a 5 and 10-year plan for expansion of the AVID program at DE Middle School. This policy change is an imperative part of the plan and

is supported by Karen M. Watt et al. (2010) and her research. The goal is to make DE Middle School an AVID National Demonstration School within a 5-year time period. Through a series of ANOVAs (analysis of variance), Karen M. Watt et al. concluded that schools grouped by their certification status, specifically Demonstration Status schools, have a “significantly higher means in areas of group cooperation, achievement press and professional teacher behavior.” (2010, p.178) The three requirements to become an AVID Demonstration School are that all 11 AVID Essentials and all subcategories are implemented at an Institutionalization Level (3) and maintained for a minimum of two years for middle schools, the school must be recommended for Demonstration status by the district AVID Regional Director, and the AVID site team at the school must attend the Demonstration Strand at the AVID Summer Institute and complete a Demonstration School Application. These three criteria require the full commitment of all stakeholders and a commitment to best practices in the classrooms. The research study concluded that commitment at this level creates higher teacher expectations for the students at the school and increases the level of collegial cooperation. This becomes a win-win scenario for all stakeholders involved.

It takes approximately 3-5 years to change a culture and climate of a school. This is the time period where increases in student achievement are usually observed as a byproduct of the reform (Zhang, Fashola, Shkolnik, & Boyle, 2006). DE Middle School is currently in its second year of reform. The policy change and integration of AVID into the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum for the 2018-2019 school year fits directly within the model reform I designed for DE Middle School. Ultimately, the impact on the school by following the reform model and policy change I am recommending is supported by

Fullan & Ballew (2004) and Rooney (2005). In their studies, they concluded that including AVID and AVID Professional Development programs within a school culture resulted in a greater perception of openness within the community related to a schoolwide community that serves as a venue for “sharing ideas, values, and beliefs among stakeholders.” This positive impact on the stakeholders and their collegial relationships will ultimately create a positive impact on the culture and climate of the community.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will present the major findings present in all three portions of this study related to the program evaluation, change leadership, and school reform project and policy change recommendation. I will discuss the implications of the findings and finally my recommendation for further studies as a result of my conclusions. The purpose of this dissertation research was threefold. The first portion utilized a quantitative and qualitative analysis to evaluate and determine the efficacy of the AVID programs at the middle school level in the AB Public School District. The second portion of this research was to create a leadership plan to grow the AVID program to Demonstration School status at specific middle school in the AB Public School District. The third portion of this research outlined a key policy change to be implemented for this reform and revitalization of the AVID program to be successful. The overarching goal was to use this research to identify and serve as a working model to guide DE Middle School as it strives to become the second national AVID Demonstration School in the AB Public School District.

### **Discussion**

After evaluation of the quantitative longitudinal data provided by the AB Public School District, no statistical significance could be found in any category to show improved performance by those students who were enrolled in the AVID program 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. I found this conclusion discouraging given AVID's claims since the onset of the program to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap among students. The statistical analysis based on the longitudinal data provided by the

district for the academic efficacy of students in AVID from 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade does not statistically support this claim. AVID is a financially demanding program and given the district's commitment to the program from elementary to high school, I recommend that the academic efficacy of the AVID program at all academic levels be further evaluated.

Popham (1998) discusses Interrupted Time-Series Design as an alternative to traditional comparative studies. This model seems to fit with the concept of using longitudinal data in that "treatments of interest" produce effect across time and not one single moment that can be measured in a posttest. Longitudinal data that included all the students participating in AVID within the district would need to be included to create a sample size of any significance. AVID would serve as the treatment program, and I am suggesting a comparison of students' pre, present, and post levels after being enrolled and exposed to the academic components of the AVID program at the different grade levels. Continued analysis and time interval evaluation would provide better opportunities to determine the efficacy of AVID as a supplemental education program through the grade continuum. In my opinion, AVID, although showing no quantitative statistical significance in regard to students' academic achievement, has many qualitative benefits for stakeholders as determined by the interviews and surveys presented in section one. The change in the AVID program supported by the qualitative evidence I collected supports a positive trend in group openness, group cooperation, group atmosphere, collegial leadership, achievement press, and professional teacher behavior.

This entire study was limited to longitudinal data provided to me by the district resulting in an N value of only slightly over 100. In addition, the quantitative data is



limited to only one middle school in the district. To support the academic efficacy of AVID, especially at the middle school level, I am recommending further studies be conducted to include a further comparison of AVID and non-AVID students in an Interrupted Time-Series Evaluation Design to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the academic efficacy of the program. In the case of AB Public School District, the study should include time intervals ranging from elementary, middle, and high school to truly determine a cost to academic achievement benefit ratio.

The qualitative data in the form of surveys and interviews painted a picture of a once thriving program to one that had stagnated over a 4-year period. Changes in AVID leadership, a misconception of the purpose of the AVID program at the specific school site, and changes in administration all led to lack of stakeholder support for the AVID program at DE Middle School. Although the school maintained its Highly Certified status, there was no plan for improvement. I was hired in 2016-2017 as a change in leadership to revitalize the program. The second portion of this study analyzed the areas in need of improvement to take the DE Middle School AVID program to the next level. The goal determined by the changes purposed is for DE Middle School to become the second national AVID Demonstration School in the AB School District. The qualitative data supports a trend in a positive direction regarding the perception of the AVID program as part of the school culture and climate. The use of the 5-year plan is supported by additional research presented in the second portion of the study, and the DE Middle School has already been designated by the ABPS District as a potential candidate for Demonstration Status within this period. It is my opinion, as we shift the climate and

culture of the school, the students will inadvertently benefit academically, emotionally, and socially based on the pedagogical changes required to reach our goal.

Given the requirements to meet the AVID Demonstration School Status, the policy change I proposed in the last section is essential for our success. The concluding implications of this policy will not only help the school meet the requirements outlined by AVID Central, it will further improve the climate and culture of DE Middle School. As we strive to become a premier school in the AB Public School District, this policy expands the AVID program to incorporate once again the entire 6<sup>th</sup> grade team and make AVID strategies schoolwide practices for the benefits of all students. Given the data presented in the policy study, I conclude that this change will not only benefit the 6<sup>th</sup> grade faculty but will also provide academic, social, and emotional support through the use of the AVID components for the most vulnerable students, specifically those directly transitioning from elementary to secondary education.

### **Leadership Lessons**

In conclusion, I was able to use this three-fold study to define my role at DE Middle School in terms of leadership. As the AVID coordinator and current AVID academic teacher, my purpose over the next decade is to serve as a transformational leader at the school and within the AB Public School District. James McGregor Burns introduced the concept of traditional leadership in 1978. He defined transitional leadership as a process where “leaders and their followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation” (Burns, 1985, p. 73). In his book, published in 1985, he went on to define the attributes associated with serving a community as a transformation leader. These qualities include serving as a model of integrity, the ability

to set goals, and inspiring people to reach for the improbable by providing support, encouragement, and recognition.

My first goal as a transitional leader at DE Middle School was to create an inspiring vision and redefine the purpose of the AVID program at our school. As a transitional leader, I did this by creating a listening forum that would allow me to learn and understand the culture and values prevalent at the school. This forum of group openness allowed me to assess the capabilities and resources present among the stakeholders in the community. The details of this process are described in the change leadership section of this study.

The information provided through the process of the surveys and interviews assisted me in creating a mission that appealed to the values of the stakeholders. Together, we developed a mid-range 5-year plan and long-range 10-year goal for the DE Middle School AVID program. Finding this common ground made it easier to stir the emotions of those who had lost faith in the program and helped to revitalize their support. My experience to date has led me to the conclusion that transitional leaders are likened to that of the Pied Piper. The skill is to create a common goal that motivates the masses to follow.

I am currently in the process of serving as the leader to help deliver the vision created by the team. Transitional leaders wear many hats, including that of project manager. They must know when to lead and when to follow in order to empower and not over power their team. As a transitional leader, I find that goal setting is best defined by Locke's Goal Setting Theory. Goals must be specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. I am also discovering the need for transitional leaders to be flexible in

both their leadership of the team and management of the projects. This is often the most difficult, as it involves our own inherent hubris.

The most important piece of this entire process is the necessity to build trust-based relationships with all stakeholders. Understanding the developmental needs of the team allows me to recognize, encourage, and celebrate their personal aspirations and goals. Acknowledging the individual contributions of every member of the team builds ever-stronger relationships and we serve as each other's coaches. These relationships form the basis for the Leadership Process Model developed by Dunham and Pierce (1989). In this model the four key components to success are the leader, the followers, the context, and the outcomes. It serves a positive, long-term approach to leadership. This is essential for the success of any transitional leader.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, I feel a quote from Henry David Thoreau best describes all that I have learned from this study and the past three years in my journey to attain my doctorate in education. "What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals." Henry David Thoreau was considered a transcendentalist whose philosophies influenced Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Ghandi, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Like Thoreau, I believe in the inherent goodness of people and the power of the individual to affect change in our communities. As a transcendental, transitional leader this is my calling. Henry David Thoreau's transcendental philosophy has the very core of its roots in the Indian religions. Thoreau makes mention of the Transendentalists' indebtedness to the ancients in Walden. I close with a quote from one of my favorite authors:

In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagavat Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma, and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water-jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. (Thoreau, 1854, 318-319)

The very essence of that which Henry David Thoreau is describing stems from the ancient Sanskrit text known as Upanishads that forms the central philosophical concepts and ideas of Hinduism. In my mind, the meaning of this very quote, this three-fold study and my academic journey of a thousand miles to attain my doctorate and what I have become is embedded in the essence of the beauty and spirituality of Hinduism. Knowledge is the means to freedom, and philosophy is the pursuit of wisdom by a way of life.

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## Appendix A: Cover Letter for Participation in the Survey

Dear Participant,

I invite you to participate in my National-Louis University doctoral research study regarding the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School

The enclosed survey has been designed to collect information on the past, present and future of the AVID program at our school.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or leave blank any questions you don't wish to answer. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total.

If you agree to participate in this project, please answer the questions on the questionnaire as best you can. It should take approximately 10 minutes to complete and should not interfere with instructional time. Please sign and return one Informed Consent form in the envelope marked Consent to the secretary. Once you have completed the survey, please place the completed questionnaire in the envelop marked Survey Data and return it to the front desk secretary

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor. I appreciate your time and feedback.

Sincerely,

Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed.

## **Appendix B: Informed Consent, Adult Participant Survey**

My name is Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed., and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: “The Past, Present and Future of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School.” The purpose of the study is to understand the current status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle Schools and determine ways in which the program can be improved in order to become ABPS District’s second AVID School of Distinction and a National Demonstration School.

My project will address the past, current and future of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the AVID Program at our school. I would like to survey you in regards to your thoughts on the AVID Program a Delta Echo Middle School.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate in a printed survey that I will give to you, to be completed and returned using specific instructions I will include at the end of the survey. It should take approximately 10 minutes for you to complete the survey. All information collected in the survey reflects your experience and opinion as a faculty member at Delta Echo Middle School.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of you, the school, the district, and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants in the report. Only I will have access to all of the survey data, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all survey data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the AVID program and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu).

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at phone: (863)409-3478 or [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu) if you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol Burg, [cburg@nlu.edu](mailto:cburg@nlu.edu); or EDL Program Chair, Dr. Stuart Carrier, [scarrier@nl.edu](mailto:scarrier@nl.edu); 847-947-5017; or the NLU’s Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, [shaunti.knauth@nl.edu](mailto:shaunti.knauth@nl.edu), 312.261.3526,

National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL  
60603.

Thank you for your participation.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature Date

Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed.  
Researcher Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher Signature Date

### Appendix C: Faculty Survey

1. What is your gender? Circle One F M
2. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Circle One  
High School    Bachelor Degree    Master Degree    Doctoral Degree  
Other
3. Please list your areas of certification?
4. Please list all the courses you have taught and currently teach.
5. How well do you feel the AVID Curriculum at Delta Echo Middle School prepares students for his or her next academic year starting from their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year?  

1	2	3	4
Not at All	Moderately		Extremely
6. Are you satisfied with the elective/AVID course selection process?  

1	2	3	4
Not at All	Moderately		Extremely
7. What do you think is working well in the AVID program? Write in your answer and please be specific.
8. What suggestions would you make to help improve the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School? Write in your answer and please be specific.
9. What do you see as the greatest challenges associated with the AVID program? Write in your answer and please be specific.
10. What changes if any would you like to see for the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School for next year including criteria for admittance to the program, curriculum, student and parent engagement, administrative support? Write in your answer and please be specific.
11. Is there anything else you wish to share about your experience with the AVID at Delta Echo Middle School? Write in your answer and please be specific.

## **Appendix D: Informed Consent, Site Administrator**

### School Site Administrator: Consent to Conduct Research at School Site

My name is Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed., and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent for selected staff at your school to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: The Past, Present and Future of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School. The purpose of the study is to understand the status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School and identify areas of improvement necessary to implement changes in the program to move Delta Echo Middle School from Secondary Site Certification to a School of Distinction and National Demonstration School.

My project will address the process of AVID Program and how it impacts those involved Delta Echo Middle School. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the AVID Program to implement changes and increase the school's certification status. I will survey up to 40 teachers and interview up to 1 principal, 3 assistant principals and 5 teachers and 2 Guidance Counselors in regards to their thoughts on the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School.

I will give teachers who volunteer a printed survey to be completed and returned using specific instructions as included, and an Informed Consent form indicating that they understand the purpose of the survey and agree to take the survey. The survey should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Also, participating teachers and administration may volunteer for one 30-minute interview with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order to clarify any questions I may have regarding their interview data. I will conduct one 30 minute interview with those participants who have completed an Informed Consent form indicating that they understand the purpose of the interview and agree to be interviewed. I will audio tape the interviews and transcribe the tapes. I will also collect FSA student data results for writing and mathematics from 2012-2016, AVID student information from MYAVID.org and 8<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT scores from 2016-2017, which the district has informed me they will provide to me. All information collected in the surveys and interviews reflects their experience and opinion as a teacher regarding the past, present and future status of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School.

By signing below, you are giving your consent for me to ask for voluntary participation from selected stakeholders to participate in this research study: to complete a survey and to participate in one interview. All participation is voluntary and participants may discontinue participation at any time with no negative effects. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all surveys, interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely

to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu).

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: (863) 409-3478; email [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu); or my address 2414 Brownwood Drive, Mulberry, FL 33860. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: [cburg@nl.edu](mailto:cburg@nl.edu) ; phone (813) 397-2109; 5110 Sunforest Blvd. #102, Tampa, FL 33634; or EDL Program Chair, Dr. Stuart Carrier, [scarrier@nl.edu](mailto:scarrier@nl.edu); 847-947-5017; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, [shaunti.knauth@nl.edu](mailto:shaunti.knauth@nl.edu), 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

Principal Name (Please Print)

Principal Signature	Date
<u>Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed.</u>	_____

Researcher Name (Please Print)

Researcher Signature	Date
_____	_____

## **Appendix E: Informed Consent, Adult Participant Interview**

My name is Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed., and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Tampa, Florida. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: The Past, Present and Future of the AVID Program at Delta Echo Middle School. The purpose of the study is to understand the current status of the AVID Program and Delta Echo Middle School and determine areas of needed change in order to implement a plan to take Delta Echo Middle School from AVID's Secondary Certification to a School of Distinction and a National Demonstration School.

My project will address the process of the past and present AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School in order to create a 5 year plan for the school that supports the strategic initiatives of our school and that of ABPS District. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the current AVID program.

You may participate in this study by signing this consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in one 30-minute interview, with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order to clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. I will audio tape and transcribe the interviews. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as a teacher of AVID students and faculty member at Delta Echo Middle School.

Your participation is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time. I will keep the identity of the school and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the interview tapes and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts, tapes, and notes. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation process of the AVID program at your school and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu).

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone: (863) 409-3478, email [LBradner@my.nl.edu](mailto:LBradner@my.nl.edu); or my address 2414 Brownwood Drive, Mulberry, FL 33860. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol Burg, [cburg@nl.edu](mailto:cburg@nl.edu) or EDL Program Chair, Dr. Stuart Carrier, [scarrier@nl.edu](mailto:scarrier@nl.edu); 847-947-5017; or the National-Louis Institutional Research Review

Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, [shaunti.knauth@nl.edu](mailto:shaunti.knauth@nl.edu), 312.261.3526,  
 National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL  
 60603.

Thank you for your participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

Lori Beth Bradner, M.Ed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Researcher Name (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Researcher Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



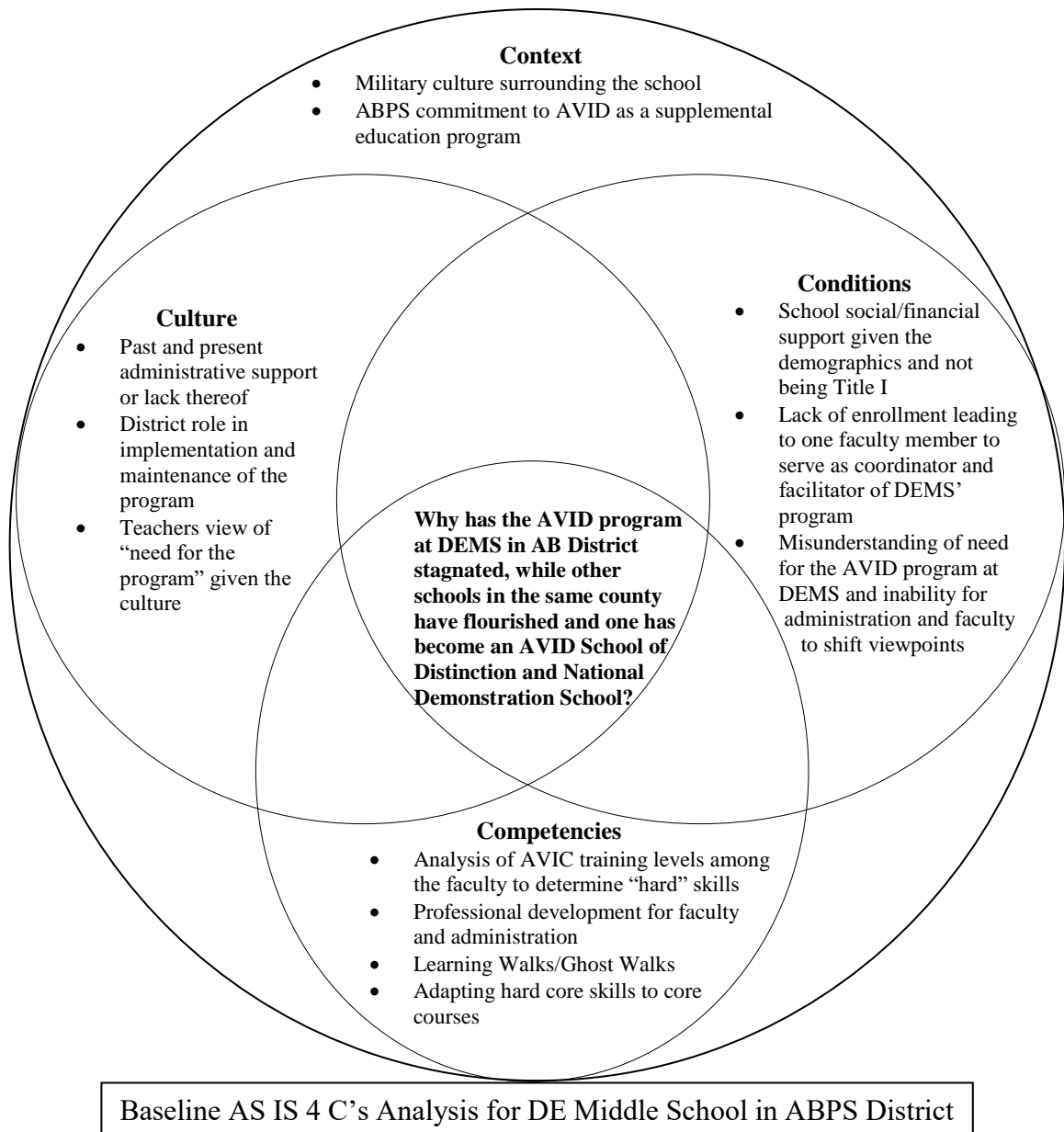
## **Appendix F: Administrator and Guidance Counselor Interview Questions**

1. How did ABPS District determine the schools for the roll-out of the AVID program and where did Delta Echo Middle School fall in that cascade?
2. How did the district support the administration and the faculty during the establishment of the program at Delta Echo Middle School?
3. What was your opinion/perception of the program at the start of the program? What was the perception of your faculty at the onset of the program?
4. What things worked well in the AVID Program?
5. What things did not work well?
6. Did your perception and the perception of the faculty about the AVID program change over time? When and why?
7. What are some of the obstacles you have encountered in regards to the AVID Program?
8. What suggestions do you have to address the obstacles in the AVID program?
9. What is your current perception of the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School?
10. Where would you like to see the AVID program at DEMS 1 in the next 5 years?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School?

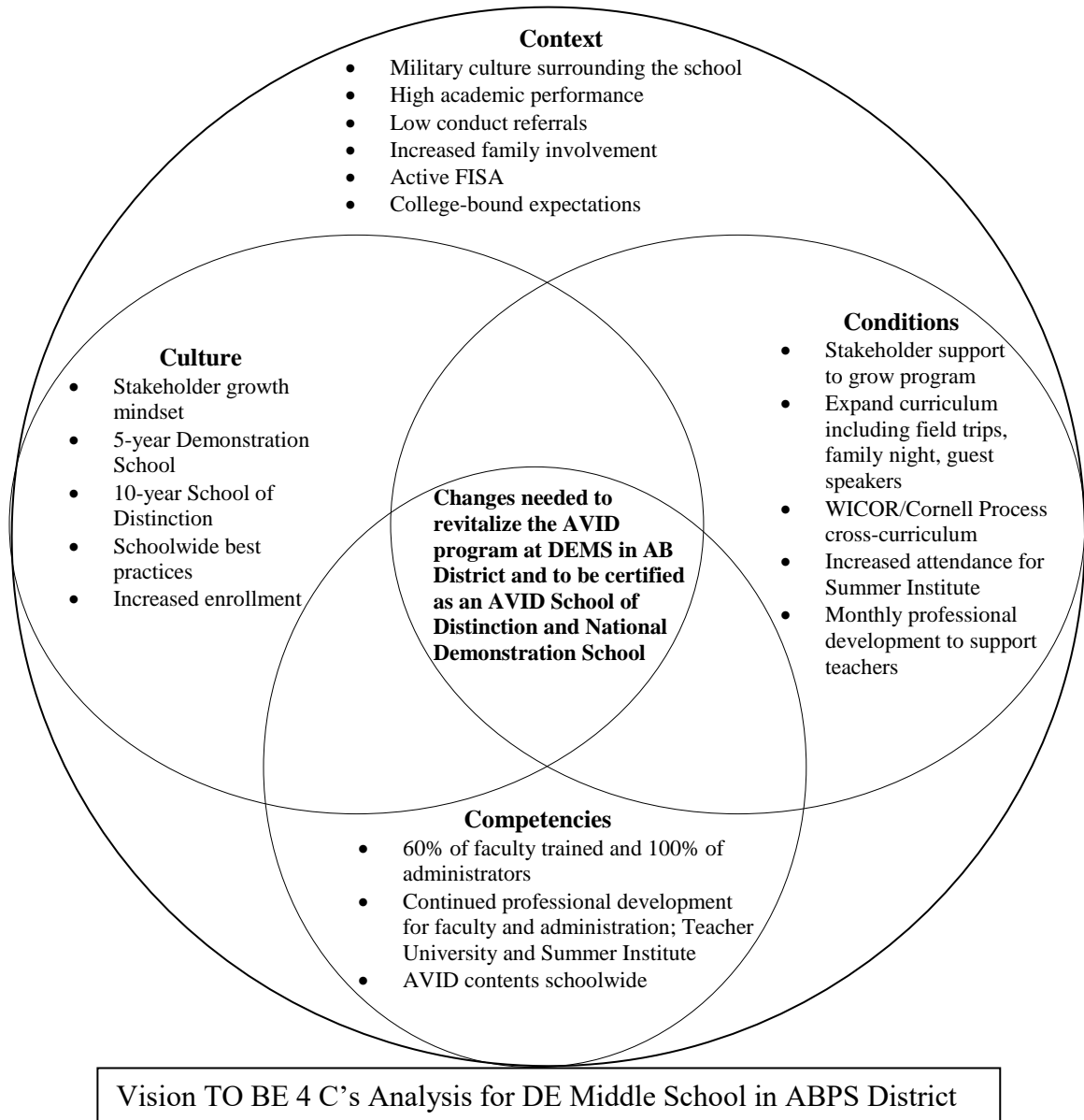
## **Appendix G: Support Staff Interview Questions**

1. What roll did the administration play during the establishment of the program at Delta Echo Middle School?
2. During the onset of the program did you feel the administration fully supported the implementation of the program? How?
3. What was your opinion/perception of the program at the onset?
4. What things worked well in the AVID Program?
5. What things did not work well?
6. What is your current perception of the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School?
7. Did your perception and the perception of the faculty about the AVID program change over time? When and why?
8. What are some of the obstacles you have encountered in regards to the AVID Program?
9. What suggestions do you have to address the obstacles in the AVID program
10. What benefits does the AVID program offer to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Delta Echo Middle School?
11. What benefits do you feel the AVID program has offered or offers you directly?
12. Where would you like to see the AVID program at DEMS in the next 5 years?
13. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about the AVID program at Delta Echo Middle School?

## Appendix H: AS-IS 4 C's Analysis



## Appendix I: TO-BE 4C's Analysis



**Appendix J: Action-Strategies Mid-term and Long-term Outcomes Chart**

Planned Project Activities and the mid-term and long-term outcomes:

Activities	Mid-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<p><b>Domain 1:</b> AVID Schoolwide</p>	<p>Increased enrollment in AVID Classes</p> <p>Recruitment of AVID instructors</p> <p>Institutionalized Level (3) two years</p>	<p>AVID in all grade levels 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup></p> <p>AVID Coordinator and one instructor per grade level</p> <p>AVID Demonstration School recommendation by county and application</p>
<p><b>Domain 2:</b> AVID Systems</p>	<p>AVID WICOR cross-curriculum</p> <p>Cornell Notes cross-curriculum</p> <p>Agenda/time management tools all subject areas</p>	<p>Binders/Interactive notebooks schoolwide</p> <p>Cornell-Notes schoolwide</p>
<p><b>Domain 3:</b> AVID Schoolwide Leadership</p>	<p>50% Site Team on ILT</p> <p>Unified mission and vision</p> <p>Increased professional development-Teacher University and Summer Institute</p> <p>Tutor Recruitment</p>	<p>100% Site Team on ILT</p> <p>Interactive webpage, application, and referral process</p> <p>100% faculty and administration trained at Summer Institute</p> <p>Maintain 7:1 ration for tutorials</p>
<p><b>Domain 4:</b> AVID Schoolwide Culture</p>	<p>Level (3) in all 11 Essentials</p> <p>AVID Site Team Members serve on Internal Leadership Committee</p> <p>Integration to 6th grade if even on the elective rotational wheel</p>	<p>Demonstration School status</p> <p>100% ILT AVID Trained</p> <p>100 % continued participation in AVID Summer Institute and District trainings</p> <p>AVID school not just a school with an AVID program</p>

## Appendix K: Data Tables

Table 5

*7<sup>th</sup> grade FCAT scores*

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t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

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	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.373134	3.417910448
Variance	0.631389	1.216644052
Observations	67	67
Pearson Correlation	-0.0596	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	66	
t Stat	-0.26229	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.396956	
t Critical one-tail	1.668271	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.793912	
t Critical two-tail	1.996564	

---

t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

---

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.641791	3.492537313
Variance	0.74853	1.102216192
Observations	67	67
Pearson Correlation	-0.03635	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	66	
t Stat	0.882422	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.190376	
t Critical one-tail	1.668271	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.380751	
t Critical two-tail	1.996564	

Table 6

*8<sup>th</sup> grade FCAT scores*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.142857143	3.230769231
Variance	0.608294931	1.024038462
Observations	63	65
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	120	
t Stat	-0.551501891	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.291157587	
t Critical one-tail	1.657650899	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.582315173	
t Critical two-tail	1.979930405	
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.53968254	3.569230769
Variance	0.833077317	0.999038462
Observations	63	65
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	126	
t Stat	-0.174742899	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.430781067	
t Critical one-tail	1.657036982	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.861562134	
t Critical two-tail	1.978970602	

Table 7

*8<sup>th</sup> grade honors courses enrolled*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	1.095238095	1.151515152
Variance	0.764976959	0.868997669
Observations	63	66
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	127	
t Stat	-0.35374705	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.362057518	
t Critical one-tail	1.656940344	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.724115036	
t Critical two-tail	1.978819535	

Table 8

*9<sup>th</sup> grade GPA*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.012462903	2.924987097
Variance	0.420548881	0.630892608
Observations	62	62
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	117	
t Stat	0.671724587	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.251541618	
t Critical one-tail	1.657981659	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.503083237	
t Critical two-tail	1.980447599	



Table 9

*9<sup>th</sup> grade FCAT scores*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.983870968	3.233333333
Variance	0.770227393	1.470056497
Observations	62	60
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	107	
t Stat	-1.298227715	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.098500197	
t Critical one-tail	1.659219312	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.197000395	
t Critical two-tail	1.98238337	

Table 10

*9<sup>th</sup> grade honors courses enrolled*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.983870968	3.233333333
Variance	0.770227393	1.470056497
Observations	62	60
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	107	
t Stat	-1.298227715	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.098500197	
t Critical one-tail	1.659219312	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.197000395	
t Critical two-tail	1.98238337	

Table 11

*9<sup>th</sup> grade advance placement courses*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.983870968	3.233333333
Variance	0.770227393	1.470056497
Observations	62	60
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	107	
t Stat	-1.298227715	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.098500197	
t Critical one-tail	1.659219312	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.197000395	
t Critical two-tail	1.98238337	

Table 12

*10<sup>th</sup> grade GPA*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.97223	2.954
Variance	0.358317694	0.597096363
Observations	60	58
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	107	
t Stat	0.142934342	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.443305427	
t Critical one-tail	1.659219312	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.886610854	
t Critical two-tail	1.98238337	

Table 13

*10<sup>th</sup> grade FCAT scores*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.155172414	3.363636364
Variance	0.905323654	1.420875421
Observations	58	55
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	103	
t Stat	-1.024011192	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.154114496	
t Critical one-tail	1.659782273	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.308228992	
t Critical two-tail	1.983264145	

Table 14

*10<sup>th</sup> grade honors courses enrolled*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.466666667	2.321428571
Variance	1.236158192	1.858441558
Observations	60	56
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	106	
t Stat	0.626229373	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.266255364	
t Critical one-tail	1.659356034	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.532510729	
t Critical two-tail	1.982597262	

Table 15

*10<sup>th</sup> grade AP courses*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.466666667	2.321428571
Variance	1.236158192	1.858441558
Observations	60	56
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	106	
t Stat	0.626229373	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.266255364	
t Critical one-tail	1.659356034	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.532510729	
t Critical two-tail	1.982597262	

Table 16

*11<sup>th</sup> grade GPA*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.1000625	3.092510526
Variance	0.215251463	0.31080443
Observations	56	57
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	108	
t Stat	0.078325121	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.468857185	
t Critical one-tail	1.659085144	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.93771437	
t Critical two-tail	1.982173483	

Table 17

*11<sup>th</sup> grade PSAT scores*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.1000625	3.092510526
Variance	0.215251463	0.31080443
Observations	56	57
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	108	
t Stat	0.078325121	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.468857185	
t Critical one-tail	1.659085144	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.93771437	
t Critical two-tail	1.982173483	

Table 18

*11<sup>th</sup> grade honors courses enrolled*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3.1000625	3.092510526
Variance	0.215251463	0.31080443
Observations	56	57
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	108	
t Stat	0.078325121	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.468857185	
t Critical one-tail	1.659085144	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.93771437	
t Critical two-tail	1.982173483	

Table 19

*11<sup>th</sup> grade AP courses*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.216216216	2.393939394
Variance	1.285285285	1.058712121
Observations	37	33
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	68	
t Stat	-0.68753063	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.247043423	
t Critical one-tail	1.667572281	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.494086846	
t Critical two-tail	1.995468931	
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	1.054054054	1.303030303
Variance	1.274774775	2.15530303
Observations	37	33
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	60	
t Stat	-0.788256467	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.21682503	
t Critical one-tail	1.670648865	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.433650061	
t Critical two-tail	2.000297822	

Table 20

*12<sup>th</sup> grade honors courses enrolled*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	1.62962963	1.788461538
Variance	2.08665269	1.934766214
Observations	54	52
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	104	
t Stat	-0.576718012	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.28268808	
t Critical one-tail	1.659637437	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.565376159	
t Critical two-tail	1.983037526	

Table 21

*12<sup>th</sup> grade AP courses*

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	2.702702703	2.903225806
Variance	3.603603604	3.223655914
Observations	37	31
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	65	
t Stat	-0.446840343	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.328237832	
t Critical one-tail	1.668635976	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.656475663	
t Critical two-tail	1.997137908	
t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances		
	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	0.72972973	1.580645161
Variance	1.591591592	4.051612903
Observations	37	31
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	49	
t Stat	-2.041596983	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.023297379	
t Critical one-tail	1.676550893	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.046594758	
t Critical two-tail	2.009575237	