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An Evaluation of AVID as Related to Student Growth in Math and English Language Arts and Teacher Satisfaction with AVID

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An Evaluation of AVID as Related to Student Growth in Math and
English Language Arts and Teacher Satisfaction with AVID

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March 18, 2022

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An Evaluation of AVID as Related to Student Growth in Math and
English Language Arts and Teacher Satisfaction with AVID

Gwendolyn Hope Lindsey
Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education

National Louis University
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ABSTRACT

In education, there is a certain population of students that are overlooked. The low-socioeconomic student whose parent(s) did not attend post-secondary education is often overlooked. There is a need to provide these students with supports to become successful both in secondary and post-secondary education. Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is such a support. AVID can also provide support and satisfaction for the educator. Using quantitative data, I demonstrated in my study the success of the AVID student as compared to the non-AVID student in English Language Arts and Math. I used qualitative data and quantitative data to research teacher satisfaction using AVID.

PREFACE

As a school administrator in a public school system, I am interested in evaluating instructional strategies to support and assist low socio-economic students who have not been given rigorous academic expectations. These students have parents who did not attend any post-secondary education or vocational schools. In the district of this study, much attention, time, and finances are given to the students who are in the bottom 25% academically as well as the students who are highly proficient. However, the students described above, get little recognition and are often overlooked. One requirement of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is that the student must take at least one advanced or honors class. The students in my study who were enrolled in AVID had never been in that type of academic situation. As a result, I wanted to research the AVID students in order to determine how these students could be supported.

While I was researching various programs, the school of study was initiating AVID and working towards certification to become an AVID School. During my investigative process, I started to hear a change in teacher attitude toward the profession. What were once negative meetings and complaint sessions, started to take a change toward the positive. As a result, I wanted to research if AVID had influenced a change in teacher job satisfaction.

I used quantitative data to research my questions involving the students. I looked at Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessments (QSMA) in Math and English Language Arts to compare AVID students with non-AVID students in order to determine what the difference was in academic performance between these two groups. I also evaluated attendance and discipline data quantitatively.

I used qualitative data when researching teacher job satisfaction pertaining to AVID. Teachers were given a survey to complete on their own and the surveys were kept anonymous. Teachers were given a month in order to complete the surveys before I collected and analyzed them. Following the surveys, I conducted interviews with teachers who volunteered their time.

One of the leadership lessons that I learned while doing this dissertation was that politics are alive and well. I now understand that in order to make a change, educators need people both in the school system and outside of the school system to “buy in” to what they want to change and why. It is best to have research to present and troubleshoot any areas with sound solutions, so that everything is neat and orderly for presentation. The least number of unknowns is best when presenting new information to others. Also, having other people to assist with the presentation and the question-and-answer portion is a benefit. Another lesson I learned was to not spring a new initiative out of nowhere for the Board and the Superintendent. They need to know that their employees are conducting research to help solve a problem, but not necessarily making decisions or cornering the board into making a decision.

I learned that there is a need to support teachers when making changes. I came to understand that changes can be scary at first when the process starts. Teachers need ongoing reassurance, support, and modeling. They need to be allowed to decompress and complain with no judgment. They need to then have time to collaborate, work through problems, and be open to suggestions. Being part of the group to help guide, listen, and provide support academically, emotionally, and financially, is important for building community and being seen as a leader whom others can count on and trust.

I have grown as a leader in that I am now much more prepared and more comfortable with presenting information and talking in front of my peers. When I first started this journey,

talking to others or in front of others in the educational field was difficult for me. I was very timid, shy, and unsure of myself. I often stuttered, talked quietly, and, if I could crawl into the background, I would easily do that. Now, as I have been “forced” to present, not only to my class but to others through symposiums and other types of presentations, I am more confident when presenting.

In the past, I was never considered by others as a “real educator” due to the subject that I used to teach which was Agriculture. This stigma was also confirmed by those not only in education but in the community as well. When I left one school district and started work in another school district, the issue still stuck. I felt the same disparagement, as I started instructing students identified for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in a self-contained setting. As I moved up through the system and changed my job titles, the “you are not a real educator,” just stuck with me. It was very hard to make a mindset change as the perception had been with me for over 28 years. I am so thankful that I pushed myself to earn a degree that was very much out of my comfort zone. By working on this doctoral degree, I no longer feel that I am not an educator. I keep reminding myself that for the majority of my career, I was a teacher, and I can relate to teachers. I might have been teaching Agriculture or middle school self-contained classes, but I taught. Many of the strategies I see teachers using today, I used, and still practice for other teachers. I am a teacher!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge a number of people for their support and guidance throughout this journey. First, I must thank my parents for always supporting me, no matter how crazy my ideas are, and always having faith in me, even when I lost faith in myself! Love you more than words can say.

Going back to the beginning of my career, I truly would not have survived without the support of my D-Hall Gang. You all were constantly there for me and provided a much-needed net of advice, wisdom, and most of all comedy! Even though we all eventually went our separate ways, I can still call all of you friends, and can honestly say looking back on our experiences, working with all of you was the most rewarding time.

To Ann Turner, thank you for holding down the fort and, while completing this dream, also allowing me to fulfill my other dreams of returning to the show pen. Your friendship over the last 30+ years has been a constant support system for me and I honestly don't think I could have done it without you. Also, to the TSH gang, you guys ROCK!

To those educators and friends who pushed me, thank you for doing the pushing, even though it may have been all uphill on your part at times. Russ Randall, Jane Ashman, Donna Durden, Del Smallridge, Dr. Buckman, and Dr. Sparks – I truly appreciate all your efforts, and thanks for being patient, kind, and pushing me!!!

To Lydia and Sue – thank you for providing girls' nights out and time for relaxation and just for FUN! Thank you for never letting me get too serious and always being accepted for just being me. Your Gweney.

To my Buzzardlings for throwing my words back at me! I would always preach to each one of you that learning is a continual process. Well, you all encouraged me to “put my words

into action.” Going back to school and getting my Master’s degree was the start of the journey that I had no idea would result in me leaving the classroom, becoming an administrator, and earning my Doctorate. The Momma Buzzard is always grateful for the time, encouragement, and being invited to be part of your lives. You all make me so proud!

To Laura, who knew when we met in fourth grade that we would still be the best of friends. We may not talk often, but when we do, it is like we have never been separated. Thank you for your advice and friendship over the years.

A special thank you to all the educators who helped me with this journey. Whether you were part of the research, supported me, or checked in on my sanity, I greatly appreciate all of you. This would not have happened without you!

Lastly, I would like to thank my cohort team. I greatly appreciate the ideas, the challenges, and the friendship that you all have provided during this process. I can say that you truly made a difference for me both professionally and personally, and I am a better educator because of all of you.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my Godmother, Susan J. Riggs. You always believed in me, gave me honest advice, whether I wanted it or not, and provided a secure foundation to reach for the stars. You always encouraged me to keep moving forward and not let anyone tell me “no.” You were there for the worst and the best of times. I miss you so very much and I know that you are still looking out for me. Sue, I did it!!

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Chapter One: Introduction

With a new administration in the district under study, there was a push for more middle school students to be enrolled in eighth grade Honors Algebra 1. At the school under study, in 2019-2020, there was only one Honors Algebra 1 class, for which students were hand-selected. During the next two years, the school had three classes of eighth-grade Honors Algebra 1 students with approximately 20 students each. These students were placed based on their State Assessment (SA) scores in math, with a Level 3 or above of five levels. The school under study was not a magnet school, therefore no high achieving students were going to come from outside the school's zone. The school under study was a small middle school in a mid-size district, which enrolled under 700 students in the 2019-2020 school year. As in years past, this number generally fluctuated up and down throughout the school year by 20-35 students, as the area was very transient due to minimum wage jobs, loss of jobs, and parents needing to seek other living arrangements.

The location of the school was in the downtown historic district in the middle of a neighborhood and between two major rivers. The campus and some of its buildings were originally established in the early 1900s. At that time, the campus was an elementary building (Building 1) with the rest of the buildings serving as a high school. Both elementary and high school students shared the cafeteria, although at different times. The campus at the time was a neighborhood school, with many of the students walking to school from their homes. It remained that way until the high school moved in the 1980s to another location in the district. The school underwent many changes since the high school was relocated and was now serving as a fully established elementary school with access to all of the buildings. Eventually, a new building was added, Building 6, to provide a more substantial library and more elementary classrooms.

A new elementary school was built next to the new high school and some students were moved to that location. The original middle school, located in a small community adjacent to the main town, was becoming unsafe for students, and they were moved to what was now the school under study. With the growth and development of a larger community than the one under study, located approximately 20 miles southeast of the small community under study, the population grew to over 1,200 students in 2006. The addition of a new building replaced the citrus grove that was established by the Agricultural Program many years before. The school under study was splitting out of its seams even with the addition of three extra portables. At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, a new elementary/middle school was built in the larger community, and as a result, the school under study lost approximately 700 students and many teachers to the newly built school. Enrollment dropped with the moving of students but had remained constant between 500-630 students, except for the 2019-2020 school year.

While the middle school was small in regard to the student population, it was not small in acreage. At the time of my study, the school sat on over 20 acres with a high school-sized football field, track, and gymnasium that were remnants of the original high school. The best feature of the school was the auditorium built in the 1930s but completely refurbished by the historical society in the early 2000s. The grounds also contained numerous Sweet Gum Trees, Crepe Myrtles, Harringtonias, and other landscaping plants. There was a water feature with landscaping and a picnic area complete with a covering of Confederate Jasmine. There was also plenty of room for vegetable gardens in the ground or grown in the Hydroponic House and Greenhouse. Pens to raise livestock for the county and state fairs were also located there.

Just a short walk up the hill behind several of the school's buildings one could see the main river that used to be the main source of income for the town and its residents. As such, the

school was host to many turtle nests, snakes, deer, otters, and the occasional alligator would take a trip through campus or try to take up a new home in one of the retention ponds next to the cafeteria.

At the time of my study, the student population was 49.3% female and 50.7% male. The ethnicity of the school under study included the following demographics: Asians, 1.2%; African American, 6.9%; Hispanic, 25.8%; Native American, 0.3%; Multi-racial, 6.4%; and, White, 59.4%. The school under study had an Exceptional Student Education (ESE) population of 11.8%, English Language Learners (ELL) made up 19%, the migrant population was at 0.1%, and Gifted Education students composed 3.9% of the population. The school also had 78% of its students who qualified for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, reflecting a high percentage of low-income families who were served, which was one of the reasons why the school under study was also a Title 1 school (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality).

Purpose of the Evaluation

For the 2018-2019 school year, the school leaders decided to implement the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) system. The system aims to shift schools to a more equitable, student-centered approach to close the opportunity gap for students and prepare them for college, life skills, and careers (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018). AVID supports educators as they work with students. Through the system offered at the school under study, school leaders aimed to select “bubble” students in seventh grade. Those students were defined as scoring a solid Level 3, based on a five-point scale on the State Standards Assessment (SA) on which Level 3 was considered satisfactory, but they had not moved in growth from their sixth-grade year to their seventh-grade year, nor were they identified for honors or advanced classes. I chose to evaluate the effectiveness of the system in its infancy as related to the

district's initiative to move more students into advanced and honors classes. I was specifically looking at math and ELA scores at the end of the year to identify any growth as related to SA in ELA and math.

The specific purpose for the evaluation of the AVID system at the school under study was two-fold for me. The system was going to continue into the 2019-2020 school year and would add students from sixth grade, seventh grade, and eighth grade. I needed to increase my awareness of the system for myself as I would be included in AVID meetings and would be the lead for behavior management and assist with teaching strategies. I needed to look at the effectiveness of the system as we moved forward. I needed to determine if AVID was effective to reach the goal that the school under study established at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, which stated that AVID would be instituted at the current school under study. When interviewing the Assistant Principal of Curriculum, I asked why they were implementing AVID. She stated, "We are adding AVID to improve math skills and prepare students for Algebra 1 Honors, as well as preparing them for more rigorous courses while they are with us [the school under study], as we as prepare them for their future education."

What I found fascinating about AVID, was how AVID started in the first place. Teachers at Clairemont High School, in California, had very low expectations for a group of students that were bussed to their school from disadvantaged areas in San Diego. One teacher, however, felt different than the rest of her peers. Mary Catherine Swanson believed that if her students were willing to work hard, she could teach them the valuable skills that they would need to be college-ready. She started working with her students in the 1980s and learned various strategies and applications. Her work proved to be valuable and successful at Clairemont High School and the California Department of Education granted funds for the AVID system in 1986 to be dispersed

throughout San Diego County. In 1989, a Summer Institute was formed to assist teachers in learning AVID Strategies and had 258 attendees the first year (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018).

Ms. Swanson was the first teacher to be honored with receiving the Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Education in 1991. In 1996, AVID expanded to all regions of California, and other states, and was the method of teaching for all Department of Defense Dependent Schools (DoDDS). In 2007, AVID Elementary was launched nationwide, and in 2010, AVID for Higher Education was launched and allowed AVID to reach educators and students by providing professional learning and assisting colleges in strengthening students in their freshman year. Currently, AVID is implemented in more than 6,400 schools in 47 states across the United States and has systems in schools in Canada, Australia, and the Department of Defense Education (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018).

The entire AVID system started with a teacher who knew that her students could do better and set the expectation for them to do so. She started in her own classroom and grew the system from that classroom to her school, to her district, then state, and now across the United States and other countries. I wonder if she thought back in the 1980s, that what she was implementing to assist her students would help over two million students and 50 postsecondary institutions. This is what drove me to look into this system, research it, and assist in the understanding of how this system works and how it assists in growing students (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018).

Rationale

My reason for selecting this system to study was to evaluate if the system was indeed meeting the math and ELA goals of the school under study. The school under study was challenging students to enroll in more difficult and rigorous courses and to just not be satisfied with the status quo of “I can’t do it, so I will not even try.” The school under study was focusing on supporting students and giving them the skills to be successful. The system also promoted leadership and citizenship skills that students will need not only to be successful in school but also successful in life. However, after saying that, I was concerned about making sure this system would do no harm to students, as the students involved had never been pushed academically. I wanted to see that students enrolled in the system, as well as the teachers utilizing the system, were as successful as they could be. I wondered if this system would indeed improve the students at the school under study and prepare them for achievements after high school.

In my professional experience, I have seen many educational programs come and go with little fanfare, but the leaders at the school under study chose to implement the AVID system and were very dedicated to it. As a graduate of a local high school, I had a unique perspective about the four schools that made up the area as well as the community itself. At the time of my study, there were four schools that made up the local community: two elementary, one middle, and one high school that also housed a middle school. One of the elementary schools was close to another school district in the north, and while some of the students from this elementary school would continue their education at the middle school in my study, others would attend a middle and high school in the northern part of the county, as this school was located on the county line of the district under study. The second elementary school was located next to the high school campus.

Changes continued to occur. The school under study as described above would be impacted by another split in the population as happened with the elementary school in the north part of the county. Most students at the school under study would attend the local community high school; however, many students who lived in a separate neighborhood would attend another high school outside the local community.

The larger community southeast of the school under study had a fifth through eighth-grade school. These students would, for the most part, attend the high school in the same small community as the school under study. However, many would attend another high school, as that school was closer than the local community high school, while many would also apply to a high school with a Fine Arts Program.

The high school located in the local community was the smallest high school in the school district and would pull students from the school under study as well as the fifth through eighth-grade school. The local community had been treated as the lower rung in the educational system of the district under study. If the schools in the community of study did not succeed, the expectation that students would not do well was attributed to the fact that they lived in the city where there were more low-income families. As I was a member of this community, this mindset rankled my professionalism as an educator. The students in the community were just as brilliant, successful, and caring as any other student in the school district. I was protective of these students and wanted to do the best I could for them. I was committed to preparing these students to be successful in school, their careers, and their community.

In the 2017-2018 school year, the school under study received a state-assigned B as a school grade, mainly due to acceleration points from Algebra 1 Honors in the state's formula for grading schools. During the 2018-2019 school year, the school grade dropped to a C, missing a B

by three points (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality). This had demoralized the school's teachers and staff. I intend to continue to strive to be an agent for positive change by creating success and achievements worthy of celebration and pride. My hope was that the AVID system would assist in this endeavor. The teachers sent to the AVID training during the summer of 2019 returned excited and eager to start the new school year.

I hoped that this system would be beneficial to the students at the school under study and put them in the positive light that they so deserved. Being a Title 1 school, with 78% of students receiving free or reduced-price lunch, the school under study received additional funds from the state Department of Education to assist the school in meeting the needs of students who were homeless or socio-economically disadvantaged. The school assisted students who faced many challenges on a daily basis including but not limited to hunger, lack of stability at home, lack of success, struggles with family finances, parent incarcerations, and failures at school. Students needed to feel part of a community, to be successful, and to have that inner belief in themselves. I evaluated this system's original use to improve students' test scores, grades, and to prepare them for honors courses, specifically Honors Algebra 1.

This information, shared with all stakeholders, would enable them to see the results, the potential at the school under study, and encourage them to provide additional support. The information gathered would keep the district leaders informed about the possible successes and failures of the system and how AVID could be replicated at other schools if successful, as well as how the system implementation could be changed, if at all, to work in other capacities. If implementing AVID strategies improved student success, it would be important to reveal those results to all stakeholders (faculty, staff, community leaders, students, parents, church ministries, clubs, and other organizations).

Goals

My intended goal in evaluating the AVID system was to use inquiry to identify any growth students enrolled in this system had in math to prepare them for Honors Algebra 1. Since this system was new to the community, I wanted to provide insights into the system to the community. If after evaluation and restructuring, if needed, I wanted to promote the system within the community and develop the system to where there would be a demand and a waiting list for students versus trying to come up with enough students and parents willing to become involved to just barely fill one class. By evaluating the system and becoming more familiar with it, I could expand on the system and assist more students. I also wanted to evaluate the system to identify if the system would help students be career-ready, by entering the workforce or continuing onto a vocational certification route.

Definition of Terms

According to the AVID Website, “The 4 A’s framework provides educators with a pathway toward meaningfully integrating digital tools and WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, Reading) instructional practices to differentiate instruction and increase student ownership and independence of learning” (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b). The 4A’s are used as a nickname for Adopt, Adapt, Acceleration, and Advocate. This is the main foundation of AVID’s digital learning framework. Adopt refers to when teachers understand and incorporate digital tools to enhance learning and instruction. Adapt is when the teacher uses digital tools to change teaching practices and become more student-centered and collaborative. When a teacher accelerates and promotes student ownership of learning to produce engagement and authentic tasks, the students and the teacher are in the accelerate phase of the framework. During the advocacy phase, the teacher begins to support digital use in

instructional practices; at this point, the student achievements and outcomes could not be reproduced without the use of transformative teaching. Joseph Murphy stated, “Collectively, instructional capacity, norms of the school as an academic place, and effective instructional program help to foster academic press” (AVID Center, 2018b, p. 101). The AVID System changes the mindset of the teacher toward giving every student the skills to learn and to advocate for themselves. It also changes the student into believing in themselves and trusting in the skills that they have acquired to help them succeed.

Research Questions

There were many questions that I used to guide my evaluation of the success of the system. My primary research questions were:

- To what extent does AVID have an impact on student achievement, discipline, attendance, and character development.
- To what extent does AVID have an impact on teachers’ job satisfaction?

My related questions regarding educators were:

- What do teachers think AVID is all about before they take AVID training?
- In what ways do teachers think the AVID System enables them to become better teachers?
- To what extent do teachers think the AVID System is a supportive experience and helps teachers have an improved attitude towards the profession?
- To what extent do teachers perceive that their experiences with AVID have helped them personally?

My related questions regarding students were:

- To what extent do students who are enrolled in AVID score higher on assessments than their peers who are not enrolled in AVID?
- To what extent does students' attendance in school improve from the year before they were enrolled in AVID as compared to the year they were enrolled in AVID?
- To what extent do students' discipline incidents decrease from the year before their enrollment in AVID as compared to their first year of enrollment in AVID?

Student growth was identified by analyzing SA data from entry into the program to the most recent data. Growth did not need to be from one level to another but showing growth within the sublevels of the grade was important to my evaluation. Grades were another avenue to determine the success of the system.

Within the scope of the system, organizational skills were taught. I wanted to understand if by becoming more organized students would be able to identify homework and classwork, keep track of it, and meet the deadlines for turning in assignments. This may translate into better grades. Behavior was monitored by teacher tracking forms and student discipline office referrals. Attendance was a serious issue at the school under study. I wondered if by providing a system where students felt accepted and experienced success, then the students would come to school more often to be a part of the group. This was tracked by student attendance data and the number of unexcused absences from one year prior to entering the system to the end of every year that the student was enrolled in the system. I also wanted to determine if a student dropped out or was removed from the system, why did that happen? What steps were involved? How could this be prevented in the future? These were additional research questions to explore now and in the future.

The other area of interest for me was that of teacher satisfaction. I was sitting in a faculty meeting at the school under study and noticed that some of the teachers were not participating, had nothing positive to say about the profession and their students, and just sat during the meetings. Meanwhile, other teachers were more positive in regard to their students, were more talkative in the meeting, and were more willing to share positive thoughts about their students and what was going on in their classrooms. I wondered if it was AVID's impact on those teachers that made the difference. This became intriguing for me and I wanted to research this "change" in more detail.

Conclusion

Reflecting and evaluating the AVID system at the school under study better connected me to the school, students, teachers, and community. By being a new participant in the system, I came to understand the system and its strategies in a much more defined way than previously. Overall, educators never want to implement anything that may harm students, and the AVID system is based on having positive results, but I wondered if it would work to improve the student achievement at the school under study. I wanted to understand whether implementing AVID systems increased job satisfaction among the teachers. I was willing to put in the work and time to evaluate this system to determine the benefits of having an AVID system.

In Chapter Two, I discussed authors and articles that helped me understand the benefits of AVID. I included articles that may or may not have supported my hypothesis that AVID would benefit a rural Title I school. Along with researching the benefits of AVID among students, I also researched how AVID affects teachers in their profession.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

While researching articles for my Literature Review, I found that the website for Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) had many articles and testimonials in regard to the history, purpose, and outcomes for students enrolled and engaged in AVID. However, I had to look creatively at articles for teacher satisfaction in their careers, as there were very few articles that related AVID to teacher satisfaction.

The Beginning of AVID

Mary Catherine Swanson was the English Department head and teacher at Clairemont High School. The teachers at Clairemont had very low expectations for the students that attended the school, especially those bussed in from disadvantaged areas of San Diego, California. Due to the low expectations, many teachers felt that the students could not succeed, and therefore, for the most part, did not. Swanson did not feel this way and believed that if the students were willing to put in the work, she could teach them how to be college-ready. She began her adventure in 1980 with 32 students (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b, p. 1).

The California Department of Education (CDOE) took notice of the system, and in 1986, the CDOE dispersed funds to assist with placing AVID systems throughout San Diego County (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b, p. 1). To assist with the growing demands of AVID being placed in schools, a summer institute was introduced in 1989 and trained 258 teachers and administrators in AVID strategies. To further assist with the development and diversification of AVID, an AVID Center was established to help serve schools not only in California but the entire nation and across the globe. The nonprofit organization provided professional learning development and resources that schools would need to deliver AVID with fidelity no matter the location (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b).

In the 1990s the founder of AVID was recognized due to her continued work to improve education. In 1991 Swanson won the Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Education. She was the first and only schoolteacher to ever receive this recognition. By winning the award, AVID was now recognized throughout the nation. Dr. Hugh Mehan (1993), from the University of California, completed a study that demonstrated that 88% of AVID students enrolled in high school continued to college and maintained a grade point average of 2.46 while attending college (Avid Center, 2018b).

In 1996, AVID expanded to all of California and some other states but found its home in the Department of Defense Dependents Schools (DoDDS). The DoDDS was very important to AVID, as AVID was instrumental in the educational equity of the DoDDS. As students moved from one school to the next and from country to country, following their parent(s) as the military moved the family around, the one constant was the AVID schools (The History of AVID, 2022, p. 1).

AVID continued to receive recognition well into the 2000s. Swanson was recognized as America's Best Teacher by *Time Magazine*. Her recognition was due to her simple philosophy of raising expectations for students which resulted in her students meeting those expectations. AVID was regarded as one of the most dynamic educational reforms created by a teacher. In 2003 the College Board co-sponsored the first AVID National Conference. Soon the conference became the place to discuss best teaching strategies and to network with other AVID schools, teachers, administrators, alumni, and the community of AVID. Up until 2007, AVID was only present in secondary schools, but in the 2007 school year, AVID's strategies were introduced to elementary schools. In 2015 AVID introduced the AVID Excel system, which was developed to

assist English Language Learners (ELL), to develop language acquisition in a faster method (The History of AVID, 2022, p. 1).

As of 2018, AVID was part of 6,400 schools in 47 states across the United States. AVID also crossed borders reaching into Canada and Australia. The Department of Defense schools also continued to grow in the number of students that they served through AVID. Overall, AVID impacted 2 million students in grades K-12 and in 50 postsecondary institutions, yearly as of 2018 (The History of AVID, 2022, p. 1).

AVID Going Outside of the Classroom

AVID's mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society (AVID Leadership, 2019). Coming from a vocational teaching background, it was always important to me to be able to connect what the students were learning in the classroom to what they would be doing in the real world. AVID is a viable system in schools, especially when assisting students and their families to become more aware of post-secondary educational opportunities. AVID also assists students in becoming more organized and advocating for themselves and taking ownership of their own education (AVID Leadership, 2019). Students are able to use the skills they learned in AVID and transfer those skills to the outside workplace.

According to the article, "Bridging the Soft Skills Gap: How the Business and Education Sectors are Partnering to Prepare Students for the 21st Century Workforce" (U. S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2019), AVID teaches skills that students will need to be successful at everyday life. While in AVID, students learn more than just academic skills. They develop communication skills, learn how to work with others, and develop organizational skills that will

help AVID students in maintaining a high job performance (U. S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2019).

In the article provided by Partnership for Learning “Practical support clears a path for kids to think big about their future” (2019) the author described Laura Lyman, who attended Cascade High School in Leavenworth and was in the 10th grade. She was very proud of her accomplishments and was the first in her family to attend college. She understood that a college education would have a positive impact on her and her future.

According to the article “An integrated approach to academic and social supports: A case study of increasing college readiness through AVID” (Vander Ark & Ryerse, 2017), too many students lack college readiness (p. 5). College readiness is an indication of the level of preparation that a student needs to succeed in a credit-bearing general education of course work without having to be remediated in the core subject. While long-term historic trends point to an increase in college enrolment, over the past 10 years enrollment has declined particularly for low-income students. Between 2008 and 2013, low-income student enrollment decreased from 56% to 45% (p. 2). Just graduating high school was no longer a guarantee for success in the post-secondary world. Vander Ark & Ryerse stated that four out of ten students complete a course of study that prepares them for college or a career (p. 3). College persistence is also a great concern as only 78% of students will still be enrolled for their second year of college (p. 3). Educators have learned that AVID provides students with skills and behavior for academic success, a culture of academic peer pressure can be created, an academic mindset can be fostered, and the relationships developed through the tutorial program can be very impactful for both the tutor and the student, and strong student-teacher relationships can make all the difference (pp.7-8). These

skills assist the student in developing a mindset for success while in college and provide support for that student both academically and emotionally.

Research from the Washington Roundtable projected that more than 740,000 job openings in Washington would be available from 2016-2021, according to the Seattle Times article, “Practical support clears a path for kids to think big about their future” (Partnership for Learning, 2019). These jobs will mainly become available due to the large numbers of retirees from the baby boom generation. According to Neil Strege, vice president of the Washington Roundtable, “Opportunity will abound in Washington, and we want to ensure our kids are ready for the great jobs being created here” (p. 1). Most of the jobs will require that the workers have post-high school credentials in the form of a degree, industry certification, or an apprenticeship. Currently, only 41% of Washington’s students are projected to earn that requirement by the age of 26. The Washington Roundtable’s goal is to increase that number by 70% by the high school class of 2030 (p. 3). This will assure that students will stay in the community and be able to provide a qualified and ample workforce.

According to Laura Lyman, a 10th-grade student at Cascade High School in Leavenworth, if a student is a first-generation college-bound student, there were many systemic barriers that they have to overcome in school (2019). Classes that need to be taken, such as Advanced Placement or Honors classes, were not usually offered for students like her, non-college-bound and from a blue-collar family, with very few resources. Then there was the social-emotional barrier, by the student, parents, and educators, believing that a student with this type of background could not make it into college, let alone stay and earn a degree. AVID provides these students, those who are not projected to go toward secondary education, with rigor and support

in order for them to identify with successes, motivation, and achievement, to instill confidence within themselves (Swanson, 2017).

AVID provides a community around each student that is made up of peers, teachers, parents, and community members. Organizations such as the Washington Roundtable are essential when doing research for job opportunities that will be available for students leaving high school and post-secondary education. The organization brings together business leaders and educational partners to improve the educational system in Washington. “AVID provides a community around each student,” said Dr. Edward Lee Vargas, executive vice president of the AVID Center, “That isn’t just about learning content. It’s about teachers seeing each student’s potential, and bringing out that potential, including the will and the skill to succeed in college, career and in life” (Partnership for Learning, 2019, p. 2).

Helping Students Reach Their Potential

The AVID System is specifically designed to take students who were not academically challenged because they are that middle group of kids who are often overlooked and expose them to a more rigorous education. These students have never been considered for advanced classes or college after high school. “The goal of education in America must be for the purpose of teaching all of our students to the very highest levels – for lifting up all people” (Swanson, 2017, p. 22). For far too long, the “middle of the road” student, has been left out of the opportunity to receive a higher enriched education. These students are often those who come from lower-income families, receive average grades, score adequately on state assessments (either just below or just above the score for proficiency), and come from homes where neither parent received post-secondary education (p. 9). These students are not the gifted students who are supported in honors, advanced, or college preparatory classes in secondary school. They are

also not the students who need additional academic support via reading and math support classes. These students are truly performing at the “middle” for academic achievement for students in the school. AVID is structured for these types of students (p. 9).

AVID is made up of four approach areas: Equity, Leadership, Teacher Effectiveness, and Student Learning. Through equity, AVID is closing the opportunity gap for the students enrolled in AVID by providing them with a diverse and challenging curriculum with support. The AVID Effect is when teachers are engaged and become aware of the true power that they have over a student. They can inspire and push students beyond what even the student thinks that they can accomplish (AVID Center, The AVID effect, 2018a, p. 1). The “effect” is realized through the delivery of inquiry-based and student-centric instruction. These strategies assist in the effectiveness of the teacher. AVID inspires students to take control over and be in charge of their own learning (p. 4).

According to the AVID website (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b), first-generation, low-income AVID alumni who go to college are four times more likely to graduate than their national peers. Forty-two percent of AVID students going to college will graduate with a four-year degree within six years as compared to only 11% of their peers (AVID Center, Proven results: College enrollment, 2022). AVID creates success by helping students who are traditionally underrepresented in high education, the “middle” student, become career- and college-ready. The state in which I am researching established AVID in 1980, and in the 20 years of being part of the State’s Education System, AVID has impacted more than 2 million students, within 40 AVID Districts, and over 7,000 AVID sites. The sites are broken down into more than 300 secondary schools, more than 100 elementary schools, and approximately 10 combination school sites. During the 2018-2019 school year, the state served approximately 86,000

elementary and secondary students through AVID, and among them 69% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (AVID Center, Secondary and elementary data collection, 2019). Of the students that were seniors in high school that were in AVID, an average of 90% of them completed the entry requirements to be accepted into a four-year post-secondary institution (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality).

In the case study authored by Vander Ark, and Ryerse, (2017), the authors discussed the effect of AVID as a College Readiness Initiative (CRI). The CRI provided grants to 39 secondary schools serving low-income students in Washington State. The six-year grants supported the implementation of AVID or a personalized guidance system, to ensure that targeted academics along with social supports were there to drive equity and provide access for underrepresented students.

When referring to college readiness, the term is defined as the level of preparation a student needs to enroll and succeed in a post-secondary institution, without remediation in credit-bearing general education courses (Vander Ark & Ryerse, 2017, p. 2). Too many students have failed to meet the minimal proficiency skills for academics and lack the support to be successful at college-level work. In 2015, 83% of all high school students across the country graduated from high school, which was the highest percentage in years; however, college preparedness and enrollment have continued to decline nationally. Graduating from high school can no longer be used to ensure success in college or life (Vander Ark & Ryerse, 2017, p. 2). Over the past 10 years, enrollment in colleges or universities has declined, particularly enrollment of low-income students. Between 2008 and 2013, low-income students enrolling in college or universities decreased from 56% to 45%, across the country (Jaschik, 2015). For those students who enrolled in post-secondary education, the number of students needing remediation was very high, with

68% of two-year college students and 60% of four year-college students needing to enroll in at least one remedial course, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2017).

Vander Ark and Ryerse's case study (2017) followed AVID implementation in 39 schools over a 35-year period of time, focusing on AVID as a comprehensive approach for college readiness. What they discovered was that AVID set guideposts and inspiration for the student, the teacher, and the community. Some of the important points that AVID established were:

- Skills and behaviors for academic success can be taught. Students can learn skills and behaviors to set up for academic success, especially when given support and instructional strategies from a trained teacher and coach.
- A culture of positive academic peer pressure can be created. Building cultures of college and career readiness and confidence in the ability to be successful and achieve dreams can transform individuals, classrooms, and communities.
- Academic mindsets can be fostered. AVID teaches that one of the best strategies for building an academic mindset is to create an environment of high expectations. As the acronym for the system states, personal achievement can be gained through hard work and determination.
- Tutor processes and relationships are powerful. Whether one-on-one or in a small group, providing intensive support through tutorials boosts engagement and leads to progress.
- Strong student-teacher relationships make all the difference. The repeated statement that education and teaching are all about relationships and students will

not learn from someone they do not like, is one of the strongest pieces of AVID. Students and teachers will form a trusting and caring relationship with each other as the teacher has just as much at stake as the student. (Vander Ark & Ryerse, 2017, p. 7)

Along with these points, AVID also identified 11 characteristics that are essential for maximum impact on student success. The 39 schools in the study by Vander Ark and Ryerse (2017) followed the 11 essentials to ensure student success as follows:

1. Each school used a target student selection process.
2. They organized voluntary participation by students and staff.
3. Each student in AVID would have an AVID elective during the school day.
4. AVID students would enroll in a rigorous curriculum.
5. Instruction on promoting organizational skills and academic self-management would be taught.
6. Educators provided a curriculum that had a strong emphasis on writing and reading.
7. Educators taught in a way that promoted inquiry, collaboration, and critical thinking skills.
8. The schools used trained tutors.
9. Data were gathered and analyzed.
10. There was a commitment by the school and the district leaders for the system costs and certification of teachers.
11. And finally, each school formed a collaboration of active interdisciplinary site teams. (p. 130)

The authors noted that some of the characteristics did not come easily, nor were some followed at times. However, as the educators became more comfortable with the process and became more familiar with the characteristics of the system, more of the characteristics were in place and done with fidelity.

At the conclusion of the case study, Vander Ark and Ryerse (2017) stated that using AVID as a College Readiness Initiative reinforced that readiness is the product of a system that is and can be impacted by expectations, peer influences, guidance, enrollment in advanced and higher courses, academic and social support, a shift from teacher-led instruction to student-centered instruction, college and career awareness, along with providing decision making supports. All these characteristics benefitted the students and assisted them in becoming college-ready. Most importantly, the authors found that when educators increased their expectations and gave students the level of support needed to be successful, students rose to that challenge. The higher expectations and support are exactly how AVID is designed to work. In the state under study, 95% of AVID seniors completed their four-year college entrance exams, 77% took at least one course of rigor (Advanced Placement, Cambridge), 100% graduated from high school with an overall grade point average of 3.4 out of 4.0, 82% applied to a four-year college or university, and 75% of those who applied were accepted (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality).

Benefits for Teachers

Teachers are inherently passionate about education, and AVID assists the teachers in shifting from just delivering content to facilitating learning through inquiry-based strategies to help the formation of the student-centric classroom (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b). In “Teachers’ Beliefs about Educational Justice in an Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) Program,” the researchers Gillmore and Sullivan (2014, pp. 299-308)

found that the fundamental beliefs and rigors of the AVID system were beneficial to the student, family, and school community if run with fidelity. There is much research on the impact of AVID on students, but there is a lack of research on the teachers implementing AVID. Palmer (2009) promoted the idea that teaching is a calling so educators should always professionally reflect on their vocation. Palmer also noted,

The inward teacher is the living core of our lives that is addressed and evoked by any education worthy of the name. Perhaps the idea is unpopular because it compels us to look at two of the most difficult truths about teaching. The first is that what the teacher will never 'take' unless it connects with the inward, living core of our students' lives.... (Palmer, 2009, p. 31)

In the beginning, teachers may not all be on board with the AVID system. According to the author of the article, "The AVID Classroom: A System of Academic and Social Supports for Low-Achieving Students" (Swanson, 2017), many teachers felt the AVID students were cheating as they were talking to each other, and their scores were improving. While cheating could certainly explain what may have justified the change in performance, that was not the real reason. Teachers were invited to observe an AVID tutorial class. Teachers observed students working with each other and asking questions of the student having difficulty, which by no means could be considered cheating. The tutor worked to have that student understand a problem of concern and how to go about learning the concept by their own exploration driven by the questioning of their peers. As students became more confident in their own learning, they began to include their actual teachers, by having meaningful and direct academic conversations with those teachers. The teachers in turn began to appreciate the academic richness that was occurring in their classrooms (Swanson, 2017).

The AVID Lead Teacher is responsible for teaching the elective course that goes with the AVID system, as well as coaching the core AVID Teachers. This person is responsible for driving the system forward. The AVID Lead Teacher is also responsible for assuring the fidelity of AVID, completing documentation, and assuring that the community and the parents are involved in the process. Choosing the wrong fit for these positions will cause the system to falter and not achieve the outcome that the system was intended to produce. The lead teacher must understand the academic rigor to correctly prepare students for college, career, and life. The lead teacher must also be respected by their peers, so that they may lead other teachers instructionally and professionally, and therefore, the teachers will teach more effectively. The lead teacher must also have a vast wealth of knowledge to be able to manipulate strategies for the betterment of the AVID students (Swanson, 2017, p. 11).

Once lead teachers collaborate with other teachers in the AVID circle, referring to teachers who have attended the AVID Summer Institute, the teachers begin to become advocates for their AVID students. Teachers find themselves invested in the AVID students and keep track of their progress and their hindrances. Teachers became more familiar with various colleges so they can better assist their students when selecting and applying for post-secondary institutions. The AVID coordinator at Monrovia High School (Monrovia, California), found that some of her AVID students were complaining about falling grades in math class (Swanson, 2017, p. 17). The students blamed the teacher for their grades and claimed that they were not being treated fairly; in turn, the teacher went to the principal and asked for extended tutoring for the students. The teacher took it upon herself to offer the extra assistance.

Although allegations could not be proven that the math teacher was using unfair practices, the principal was well aware of the plight of the AVID students in that teacher's class.

By listening to the students and seeking assistance for the AVID students, the AVID teachers began to demonstrate advocacy skills for their students, whereas prior to AVID, that may not have occurred. Advocating for students and making a difference is another driving force behind teachers becoming part of the AVID community (Swanson, 2017, p. 18).

Dr. Pedro Noguera is the Peter L. Agnew Professor of Education at New York University and the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools. He is passionate about the need for the nation's education system to strive for excellence and equity for all students. It often comes about that the pursuit of excellence comes at the expense of equity. Schools are challenged to meet the needs of all students no matter how different the students may be. In Dr. Noguera's writings, as captured in the article, "AVID Culturally Relevant Teaching: A School Wide Approach" (2017), he wrote of the power of teacher expectations directly correlated with student performance. Teachers who are highly skilled and passionate build confidence in their students and they become more willing to try challenging academic pursuits. As a result of his research, Dr. Noguera developed ten practices to promote achievement for all students.

1. Challenge the normalization of failure. Race and class should not predict achievement. Every student should be seen as an individual and not as a group.
2. Stand up and speak out for equity. Schools must confront the ways in which some students are denied learning opportunities. Every student should be given the same opportunity as others despite their background.
3. Embrace immigrant students and their culture. Students from other cultures can add enrichment to the curriculum and assist in making global education smaller.

4. Provide students with clear guidelines on what it takes to succeed, including such things as study skills, “code-switching,” and seeing models of excellent work. Students can achieve if given the proper guidelines and modeling of higher achieved work samples.
5. Build partnerships with parents based on shared interests. Faculty must be trained to communicate with parents respectfully and be aware of cultural differences across race and class differences. For example, in some cultures looking an adult in the eye is a show of disrespect and asking that student to look you in the eye would be hard for them to accomplish and make that student feel very uncomfortable.
6. Align discipline practices to educational goals. Get buy-in from all staff on expectations and values that reconnect students to learning, rather than exclude them from learning. Teachers must make education matter to the students. Students must feel that there is value and worth in what they are learning.
7. Rethink remediation and focus on acceleration. Monitor learning and provide access to an enriched, rigorous curriculum with needed support and personalized interventions. Students should be challenged and being exposed to accelerated classes with other students will encourage growth in the academic areas of concern. Students should be monitored and given assistance when needed.
8. Implement evidenced-based practices and evaluate for effectiveness. Programs/Systems should be researched to assure that there is scientific evidence that the program/system will be effective. Monitoring should occur on a regular basis to assure that the program/system is effective and meets the needs of the students and

the goals of the school. Consider such things as block scheduling, peer study groups, content literacy, extracurricular activities, and mentoring.

9. Build partnerships within the community to address student needs. Students will be able to make connections between what they are learning and what is needed in the “real world” to stay employed and be productive members of society. The partnership between the school and the community will add value to what the students are learning.
10. Teach the way that students learn, rather than expecting them to adjust their learning to the rigid, set way of teaching. Teachers should focus on evidence of mastery and performance, viewing the work produced as a reflection of their teaching. Not every student learns from lectures and taking notes. Teachers should be able to identify different learning modalities and individualize learning activities to meet the needs of the students. (AVID Center, 2017, p. 1-2)

These ten practices support culturally relevant pedagogy and not only assist the students and the parents within the AVID system, but also empower the teacher by witnessing the success of their students. Teachers become advocates for the students and provide a pathway for continued education and growth.

In *The AVID Effect – Professional Learning that “Sticks” and Engages Teachers* (AVID Center, 2018a), the authors considered the various aspects of AVID and how they bring about changes in teacher behaviors to engage student learning. Professional learning is directly related to AVID and the success of all involved. The first obstacle is that teachers have to be actively engaged in their work and their school. Researchers (Gulamhussein, 2013) discovered that most professional development is ineffective for teachers in grades K-12 and found that professional

development was not very useful. A 2014 study found that approximately 70% of teachers in the U. S. are not engaged in their teaching or their school. The author went on to explain that for students to become engaged, the teachers must be engaged. Teachers who held high expectations built a safe learning environment, built positive relationships with students, and had students who met their high expectations and academic press. In turn, the teachers were satisfied that all their hard work was paying off and that they were indeed making a difference (Adkins, 2015).

Parental Involvement and Buy-In

In previous articles, AVID leaders discussed the importance of community involvement for student success. AVID is also vital for student success by building confidence, supporting the child, and increasing student achievement. One piece of the puzzle is the active engagement of the parent. How does the parent fit into this equation? According to Pannoni and Moody (2019), for the parent, there are three items that need to be considered, before enrolling in AVID.

The first need is to determine if AVID is a good fit for the student and the family. AVID is a system that is made up primarily of students in families with low-income, students enrolled in an AVID elective, and students who do not have parents who attended post-secondary education. In other words, the *middle* student who does not fit into the advanced group and does not fit into the bottom 10% of students in their school. In high school, students generally begin the AVID adventure during their ninth or tenth-grade year. However, more students are coming to high school already absorbed into AVID from middle school, and more elementary schools are joining AVID every year. As the system develops, the application process to enter AVID becomes more intense, as students will be taking honor or advanced classes and will need to enroll in the AVID elective, which may cause the student to give up or put off a more traditional elective (Pannoni & Moody, 2019, p. 2).

Secondly, AVID centers deeply on teaching the student how to be a student. The system is not centered around science, math, or any other academic or vocational skill, but focuses on teaching the skills needed to be a successful student. Students learn to develop skills to take notes, reading and writing strategies, and social and personal skills to be able to work in groups with their peers or individually. Students are also required to take at least one Advanced Placement class or can choose to take more, as their skills and confidence increase. According to the data on the class of 2018 seniors, 78% took at least one college-level course while attending high school. While in high school, the student will learn the application process for college and will receive support during that process. Parents of AVID students will have support for the application process, financial applications, and other aspects of preparing for college (Pannoni & Moody, 2019, p. 3).

The first two considerations are two factors that play a huge role with the student and the parents. However, the third consideration brings it all into focus. Ninety-eight percent of seniors in the Washington area who were in AVID partner schools graduated on time. Ninety-four percent of the students had plans to attend a postsecondary school with 93% completing the entrance requirements for a four-year institution. These numbers are very impressive considering these students will be first-time college-bound individuals in their families (Pannoni & Moody, 2019, p. 5).

In the article, “The Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) System: Providing Cultural Capital and College Access to Low-Income Students” author Philip Evan Bernhardt (2013, pp. 203-222) stated that one of the primary goals of the AVID System is to have an encouraging parent involved with their student(s) during the process. Roderick et al. (2011) suggested that parents who did not attend college have a difficult time supporting their

child in the critical decision-making process of going to college. They may be supportive in teaching their child to value education and to make plans to attend college but have a hard time with actually planning for the student to complete the application process and attend post-secondary education. When looking at African American parents from a low socio-economic background, Smith (2009) found that there was a high expectation and involvement in completing high school within the families, but it was difficult for the families to discuss post-secondary options. AVID provides support for these families to help parents understand preparations and requirements for post-secondary education, as early as middle school. Due to the lack of college-going traditions within the family, large gaps of understanding when deciding on a college and the completion of the application process needs to be identified, discussed, and remedied.

An example of the lack of understanding may be the lack of courses that the students would normally take. This lack of knowledge for the first-time college-bound student, may in the end, prevent them from entering college. Parents may not understand that their child will need to enroll in Advanced Placement courses or prepare for college entrance exams. Another example would be parents' lack of economic resources or the understanding of economic opportunities available for their child. This is the importance of the AVID System. The AVID Coordinator and teachers reach out to parents to provide them with resources to assist them in supporting their child's academia and to provide a college culture within the home. In successful AVID systems, this is done in two ways (AVID Center, 2019).

Primarily, AVID systems organize and facilitate workshops to educate parents about student success in middle and high school. From these workshops the parents gain an understanding of college readiness and the post-secondary enrollment process. These workshops

are valuable for parents because they provide an opportunity for parents to engage in discussions with other AVID parents. The parents also receive assistance in understanding financial aid, extra-curricular activities, volunteerism, and courses their child should take, along with information about grade point averages and how they relate to the college application process. Most importantly, the workshops assist the parents in creating an educationally rich environment within the home. Although it is up to the AVID coordinator at each school to plan and arrange each parent night, it is generally a team effort that includes teachers, guidance counselors, tutors, administrators, alumni, and community partners (AVID Center, 2019). When parents come to these events, they have the opportunity to talk to everyone who is involved in their child's success and can ask a variety of questions in regard to AVID and their child. This further establishes a community within the AVID system. On the opposite side, the teachers, coordinator, administrators, and others, get to not only know the student better but also meet the family to better understand the student as a whole (Bernhardt, 2013, p. 212).

As a second form of encouragement for the family, most AVID systems require the parents or guardians to sign an agreement indicating they will fully support their child's pursuit of higher education. The contract generally outlines the commitment needed to help sustain the student while in AVID. It is a reminder for the parent that their child will be enrolled in higher-level academic courses, the parent and student will need to become involved in the college preparedness programs, and they will attend AVID events. The contract further creates a more formal connection between the school and the parent (Bernhardt, 2013, p. 212).

Another benefit to AVID for both parents and students is the availability of networking. When a student is in an AVID system, that student gains an understanding of the workings of the educational system that they did not have before. As mentioned previously, the typical AVID

student is a *middle-of-the-road* student. They make average grades, come from various socio-economic backgrounds, have parents who did not attain post-secondary education, and are enrolled in an AVID elective. These students would have maintained average grades and assessment scores but would not have received any services to put them on the path to college or career readiness. The AVID curriculum directly addresses terminology for the parent and the student, so that they are aware of acronyms and topics that were not previously readily known to them. For example, the importance of a Grade Point Average (GPA) and how it is relevant for college readiness. Assisting the parent and the student in understanding the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the American College Testing (ACT) scores and how those scores impact college placement. Most importantly, how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FASFA) for government loans and/or scholarships to pay for tuition, books, housing, and other fundamentals that may be needed while attending college.

The curriculum provided by AVID allows the student to connect with a peer group that is academically focused and of a similar work ethic. Not only is the student connecting to a group, but the parents are as well, to further assist and support them with this new adventure. This may sound trite for some families, but families that are first experiencing this type of rigor may not be as comfortable with the terminology that is being thrown at them from all directions. “One of the best predictors of whether a child will graduate from college is whether or not his or her parents are college graduates” (Lewis, 2006, p. 8). This is why not only supporting the student, but the family is the foundational part of AVID (Bernhardt, 2013, p. 216).

Teacher Satisfaction

When researching AVID, I discovered that some of the teachers in the school under study had a different attitude when discussing their students. These teachers had been very pessimistic

about students, peers, and anything in education, whether that was another initiative, new technology in the classroom, or any other topic related to their job. As a result, I started researching job satisfaction with teachers, what it looks like, and what administrators can do once they realize how teachers react.

When looking at teacher job satisfaction, one must understand the teaching workforce as it differs from other workforces. The teacher workforce is composed of individuals from varied backgrounds and educational backgrounds who will be making career decisions annually to stay in the teaching field or leave the field. According to Kim and Loadman (1994, p. 2), one out of every four students who completes a teacher training program will leave the teaching profession within the first five years. Kim and Loadman found that teachers become teachers because they are interested in children, a teacher influenced them, have a love for the subject that they teach, and the opportunity to continue to learn (p. 3). However, when Kim and Loadman looked into why people do not become teachers, they found that people did not become teachers due to low pay, poor working conditions, few opportunities for advancement, lack of patience, extra duties, and disciplining students (p. 3). By using these predictors – salary, opportunities for advancement, professional challenge, professional autonomy, working conditions, interaction with colleagues, and interactions with students – administrators of schools can gain valuable information about how their teachers think about their work environment and are able to learn what motivates their teachers (p. 2).

These predictors of teacher job satisfaction are associated with both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Intrinsic variables include professional autonomy and professional challenges, interactions with colleagues, and interactions with students. Extrinsic variables are associated with working conditions and salary. Each administrator needs to look at the importance of each

aspect of the job for each individual and not just the overall satisfaction of the group. Although salary is not an aspect of the job that a school-level administrator can adjust, it is important to note that the study found that salary and fringe benefits were on the low end of what teachers ranked as what satisfies them on the job (Kim & Loadman, 1994, p. 13). The highest two aspects of teacher job satisfaction specifically deal with relationships. In fact, it is the interaction with students that ranked first, followed closely by interaction with colleagues (p. 11). Knowing these two critical aspects of teacher job satisfaction can help an administrator set up their school to retain effective teachers.

Looking at a different approach, the next article that I read talked about burnout for agricultural teachers, specifically (Kitchel et al., 2012, p. 31). One can argue that the agricultural teacher's job is much more dynamic and diverse than a subject-level teacher. The agricultural teacher has a typical work week that far exceeds many other teachers' workweek. Agriculture teachers tend to have animals, plants, and other resources under their care that will need to be taken care of outside the regular five-day-a-week "teaching" week. Also, to have an effective agricultural program, FFA, the career club associated with the curriculum, must be part of the program as it is intra-curricular and not extra-curricular. As such, agriculture teachers work as training teams and individuals year-round for competitions. Students also have Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) Programs that need constant monitoring and advice from the agricultural teacher. These activities go year-round and may last from one to nine years.

The social comparison theory is a theoretical framework that could be used to explain how agriculture teachers act because, according to Festinger (1954, p. 33), social comparison can be used within a professional culture. The theory states that either positive or negative satisfaction and stress can lead to burnout. Social comparisons can lead to negativity if a teacher

is comparing themselves to their peers that they would like to model or may see peers as more organized, performing at a higher level, or perceived as better teachers (upward comparison). The teacher may also compare themselves to peers whom they perceive are not performing or may consider them inadequate at teaching (downward comparison). All types of social comparisons may have emotional consequences. People may feel relieved when they see that others are doing worse than themselves and may feel envious of those they perceive to be doing better (p. 34).

Realizing that teachers compare themselves to others is essential to understanding teacher retention and burnout. Teachers who constantly compare themselves to others often feel they are performing at a lower level, and they feel the comparison is a negative experience; this will tend to result in more burn-out and teachers will seek to leave the school or the profession (Festinger, 1954, p. 34). The teachers who are concerned about doing a job well will have a tendency to be in an upward comparison frame of mind and will continue to strive to meet what the teacher considers to be a job well done. This theory can be held to all teachers and not just agricultural teachers.

According to the article, “Predicting Teacher Anxiety, Depression, and Job Satisfaction,” (Ferguson et al., 2012), teacher stress is defined as the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration, or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher (p. 1). Teachers feel, according to the article, that teacher workloads, class size, and student discipline, play a large role in teacher depression and anxiety (p. 40). Dealing with issues upfront and offering support for both new teachers and teachers in danger of depression and anxiety will help to alleviate the stress felt by teachers, especially if the teacher does not know how to resolve the conflict. As a teacher stated during the study, “Yes,

being a teacher could be very stressful at times, but I love teaching. I love being a teacher. It does have its 'reward'" (p. 40).

Chapter Three: Methodology

Research Design Overview

The purpose of my study was to determine the effects of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) System in up to 10 middle and high schools. My plan was to evaluate extant data to compare State Assessment (SA) English Language Arts (ELA) scores, and SA Math scores, discipline, grades, and attendance data from the school year 2019-2020 to the school year 2020-2021 after being at an AVID school site. I also compared sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade AVID students to their non-AVID peers in regard to SA ELA and SA Math achievement. I surveyed and interviewed teachers to help determine if they felt that becoming an AVID core teacher helped them in the classroom, both professionally and personally. An AVID core subject includes four academic courses: math, language arts, social studies, and science. I wanted to understand if they believed that using AVID strategies assisted them in becoming a more effective teacher and assisted them in improving their attitudes toward teaching. I asked each teacher in my study why or why not, so they had the opportunity to give their own opinions. With the school closures resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Governor of the state under study suspended the SA in 2020. Therefore, I could not use SA data but did have Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessment (QSMA) data available to me. I chose to use the QSMA as the students took this assessment every quarter (9 weeks). This shift gave me additional data to analyze.

Analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data sets provided insight to various aspects of the AVID system and its impact on students and teachers. I used a summative evaluation in conjunction with an effectiveness focus and an implementation focus to study the AVID System from student performance and teacher satisfaction. In using the summative evaluation, I was able

to describe the overall merit of the AVID system. The effectiveness focus allowed me to provide data aligned to system goals to school board members, and the implementation focus provided insight for future adaptation of the AVID system (Patton, 2008, pp. 301-303).

Research Questions

There were many questions that I used to guide my evaluation of the success of the system. My primary research questions were:

- To what extent does AVID have an impact on student achievement, discipline, attendance, and character development?
- To what extent does AVID have an impact on teachers' job satisfaction?

My related questions regarding educators were:

- What do teachers think AVID is all about before they take AVID training?
- In what ways do teachers think the AVID System enables them to become better teachers?
- To what extent do teachers think the AVID System is a supportive experience and helps teachers have an improved attitude towards the profession?
- To what extent do teachers perceive that their experiences with AVID have helped them personally?

My related questions regarding students were:

- To what extent do students who are enrolled in AVID score higher on assessments than their peers who are not enrolled in AVID?
- To what extent does students' attendance in school improve from the year before they were enrolled in AVID as compared to the year they were enrolled in AVID?

- To what extent do students' discipline incidents decrease from the year before their enrollment in AVID as compared to their first year of enrollment in AVID?

Participants

There were five stakeholder groups in this system evaluation. With permission from the school district, I used extant data for middle school AVID students including sixth graders, both male and female, including 193 non-AVID students and 15 AVID students, ages 10-14; seventh graders, both male and female including 228 non-AVID students and 14 AVID students, ages 11-15; and eighth graders both male and female, 201 non-AVID students and 15 AVID students, ages 12-16. The fourth group of participants was composed of teachers who taught core classes (math, ELA, science, and social studies) at the middle school level and high school level Grades 6-9 and were trained in AVID. This group of participants was both male and female with age ranges from 21 to 68 years. I interviewed seven teachers and eight teachers responded to the survey. Teachers' age ranged from 21 to 68.

I did not interact with students but only gathered extant data. For teachers, I sent out a letter along with the surveys. The surveys were submitted anonymously from teachers who were willing to participate. I sent an email inviting teachers to participate in an interview that I conducted. Teachers were able to speak freely and candidly under the umbrella of confidentiality. I worked with teachers throughout the year, to build trust, so that they would feel safe when speaking with me. Teachers were identified by numbers with letters and not by their name, persona, subject, or by any other characteristics that may identify them. I interviewed teachers in a secure room, to provide additional confidentiality.

Data Gathering Techniques

I implemented a mixed-methods design of extant data, semi-structured interviews, and

surveys. To ensure equitable data that would lead to a clear understanding of the system. I sought permission from the Guidance and Testing Department to analyze extant data for sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students for QSMA in ELA and math from AVID and non-AVID students for comparison. I used these data as the quantitative data for my study.

I asked teachers to complete surveys with open-ended discussion questions and multiple-choice questions, as well as interview questions. Teachers' anonymity was secured with coding identifiers (numbers and letters) and did not have their names, sex, age, or the location of their workplace identified in any way. Teachers volunteered to participate and were able to omit any part of the research that they chose.

Quantitative Data

I collected and analyzed data using the Quarterly Standard Mastery Assessment (QSMA) for the 2020-2021 school year, in ELA and Math. I also collected data for the 2020-2021 school year for attendance and discipline. I collected these data from sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade AVID students and compared the data to that of their non-AVID peers to analyze any differences in the scores between the two sets of students.

Qualitative Data

I gathered qualitative data from teachers who were part of the implementation of AVID. These teachers were trained during the AVID Summer Institute, and they were a part of the AVID site team at the schools under study. The site team was volunteers including teachers, counselors, administrators, and others who worked together to close the achievement gap and provide college readiness for all students by implementing AVID across their school site (AVID Center, The History of AVID, 2018b). I gave the teachers a survey and also interviewed them to gather qualitative data.

Surveys. Surveys for teachers consisted of five Likert Scale questions and six open-ended questions for a total of 11 survey questions (for a copy of the survey, see Appendix A). I provided all teachers, who were AVID trained, with the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the survey via paper forms that teachers could submit anonymously. I also provided the participants with informed consent forms, along with the survey questionnaire. Participants had to acknowledge consent for inclusion in the study. I gave teachers 30 days to complete the surveys and I gave them an envelope in which to seal the surveys and placed a box in the teacher mail room for them to drop in the surveys.

Interviews. I conducted interviews with AVID-trained teachers to understand their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with being a part of the AVID system. The qualitative data provided insight from a teacher's perspective. I invited all AVID-trained teachers to participate voluntarily in an interview. I contacted each teacher by phone to set up appointments to conduct the interview. I was given permission from each principal with times that I could conduct interviews on their campus, and I followed the requests of the principals. I conducted the interviews face-to-face, over the telephone, or via the internet (for a copy of the interview questions, see Appendix B). With participant permission, I recorded and transcribed the interviews accurately indicating what the participant conveyed during the interview. I took time to make sure that I was clear on the information that participants were conveying to me. I asked the same questions to every participant and did not waiver from them.

Ethical Considerations

There were no anticipated risks to participants in this system evaluation beyond that of everyday life. Participants taking part in this study may benefit by contributing to the compilation of data to assist the school district leaders in implementing and maintaining AVID

Systems within the school district. Participants may also benefit by paving the way for teachers to implement their contributions to the AVID System.

I sought permission from the school district to use extant data, surveys, and interview data in my system evaluation. Additionally, I provided participating school principals with an informed consent form requesting permission to conduct research with AVID-trained teachers. I provided participant teachers with an informed consent agreement form to sign in order for them to participate in the survey. I also provided AVID-trained teachers with an informed consent form for participation in an interview.

I did not interact with students during my research. I gathered student data based on whether the student was enrolled in the AVID elective or not. Percentages were used to differentiate between AVID and non-AVID students and grouped according to grade level and subject level. No student names, birthdates, or student numbers were used when documenting test scores, discipline records, or attendance records.

Limitations

There were several limitations to my research. The first limitation was a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. I had planned to include more middle schools for student data collection, but that was restricted. Therefore, my data was collected from one middle school. I had also planned to use the state assessment for my comparison of AVID students vs. non-AVID students. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the state assessment was waived. Therefore, I used a district assessment, developed by the district, as an indicator of student proficiency in both ELA and math. The assessment was handled, as far as security, to the same level as the state assessment; however, the questions were determined and written by the district.

I also had a limited number of teachers who agreed to complete the surveys or allow me

to conduct an interview. I included the same middle school for the surveys and interviews as I used to collect the quantitative extant data. I added one high school to the middle schools for the teacher surveys and interview. Seven teachers agreed to be interviewed and eight teachers completed the surveys out of 17 teachers who qualified for the study.

The pandemic caused an unforeseen limitation in that the AVID Summer Institute for the state was canceled. Therefore, trainings were held via Big Blue Button instead of face to face. Although, for the most part, the content was the same, the context was not. It was difficult to have large group and small round table discussions using an online platform.

Conclusion

I gathered quantitative data from students' Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessments, discipline data from the school under study, as well as attendance data. I gathered qualitative data from teacher surveys and interviews. In Chapter Four, I provided the results of my data collection and analysis.

Chapter Four: Results

In this chapter, I analyzed quantitative student data and qualitative teacher data.

Throughout my research, AVID was documented as a mindset, and the need for buy-in to create change that led to student success was apparent. The students in the “middle of the road” are often those who come from lower-income families, receive average grades, score adequately on state assessments (either just below or just above the score for proficiency), and come from homes where neither parent received post-secondary education (p. Swanson, 2017, 9). These students typically would not be on the track to academic success nor for continuation of their education, post-secondary. However, the researcher and founder of AVID, Mary Catherine Swanson, concentrated on inner-city schools. As AVID was newly started at a rural Title 1 School in the district under study, I was interested in determining if AVID would be a success under these circumstances with this select population and community. However, I found that there was no research documenting if the teachers trained in AVID and using AVID strategies were affected. Therefore, the second part of my research is focused on teacher satisfaction with AVID.

Findings

There was a total of 622 students attending the middle school under study, ranging from sixth through eighth grade, as of February 2021. Out of that number, there were 43 students who were participating in AVID. An AVID student is a student who comes from a low socio-economic background, is not enrolled in advanced/honors courses, has parents who did not attend an institution of post-secondary education, and is enrolled in the AVID elective. The AVID elective is designed to provide students with additional academic, social, and emotional support that will help them be successful in their school’s most rigorous courses (honors, advanced, college-preparatory, and college classes). The AVID system gives each school district

the flexibility to decide how many AVID elective classes to start and which grade level will implement AVID first (AVID Center, 2021a, p. 1). Further breaking down the demographics, there were a total of 193 sixth-grade students, and out of those students, 15 were enrolled in the AVID elective. Breaking down the seventh-grade class, there were 228 students with 14 students participating in the AVID elective. The eighth-grade students totaled 201 students with 15 students enrolled in the AVID elective.

The 16 teachers had one to three years of participating as a teacher trained in AVID with one teacher as a first-year AVID elective/coordinator (high school) and one teacher with three years as an AVID elective/coordinator (middle school). The years of teaching ranged from three years to 27 years of teaching. Teaching experience within the rural community ranged from one year to 27 years.

The findings of this research were broken down into student data and teacher data. The student data was focused on the Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessment (QSMA) for three nine-week periods for the 2020-2021 school year, comparing AVID students to their peers. In my data, I focused on English Language Arts (ELA) and math. In eighth grade, students are enrolled in either Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1 (high school credit). I included both the Pre-Algebra and Algebra 1 data in my results. The two other data points focused on the number of school days missed and the number of discipline referrals issued, comparing AVID students to their peers as a whole. I compared sixth-grade and seventh-grade data for ELA and math between AVID students and non-AVID students of the same grade. I also analyzed attendance and discipline data and the results are explained in the remainder of this chapter.

Student Data

I analyzed QSMA scores for the first, second, and third nine weeks, for seventh and eighth grades and first and second nine weeks for sixth grade of the 2020-2021 school year. I was only able to analyze the first and second nine weeks for sixth graders due to a technical error in the system used to record data. This was due to a technology issue within the school district. Student score sheets were loaded to a portal site via the copy\scanner machines. Once they were loaded to that site, the score sheets were tabulated and reported to another database for evaluation. Toward the end of the testing period, the district under study changed the vendor for the machines. As a result, the machines were not configured to upload testing documents.

My analysis of the data showed that in eighth grade Pre-Algebra, the AVID students scored 12.6 percentage points higher than their non-AVID peers. AVID students averaged 42.3% proficiency, while non-AVID students averaged 29.7% proficiency. Researching Algebra I scores (honors class with high school credit), the AVID students fell below their non-AVID peers by 4.9 points. AVID students scored an average of 33.7% proficiency, while the non-AVID peers scored slightly better with 38.6% proficiency. AVID students in seventh grade also scored 6.4 points lower than their non-AVID peers with 29.3% proficiency and 35.7% proficiency respectively on the quarterly math assessment. Sixth-grade AVID students scored an average of 45.8% proficiency on the quarterly math assessment while their non-AVID peers scored 34.6% proficiency, thereby scoring 11.2 points higher than the non-AVID peers. I do realize that all the scores whether AVID or non-AVID indicate, that based on the average, the school was non-proficient in math across all grade levels. This does not mean that every student is non-proficient, but the average indicated non-proficiency.

Table 1*QSMA Math Data (Quantitative)*

Grade Level Group	AVID Average	Non-AVID Average	AVID Score Difference
8th Grade Pre-Algebra (3 QSMA Scores- 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Quarter)	42.3	29.7	+12.6
8th Grade Algebra I Scores (3 QSMA Scores- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter)	33.7	38.6	-4.9
7th Grade (3 QSMA Scores- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter)	29.3	35.7	-6.4
6th Grade (2 QSMA Scores- 1st and 2nd Quarter)	45.8	34.6	+11.2

ELA scores indicated that all AVID elective students scored higher than their non-AVID peers across all three grade levels. Eighth grade AVID students scored 15 points higher in ELA averaging 67.9% proficiency while the non-AVID peers averaged 52.9%. Seventh-grade AVID students scored 15.5 points higher than their non-AVID peers. The sixth graders in AVID scored 54.6% proficiency while their non-AVID peers scored 50.0%. Therefore, the sixth-grade AVID students scored 4.6 percentage points higher.

Table 2*QSMA ELA Data (Quantitative)*

Grade Level Group	AVID Average	Non-AVID Average	AVID Score Difference
8th Grade (3 QSMA Scores- 1 st , 2 nd , and 3 rd Quarter)	67.9	52.9	+15
7th Grade (3 QSMA Scores- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Quarter)	61.7	46.6	+15.5
6th Grade (2 QSMA Scores- 1st and 2nd Quarter)	54.6	50.0	+4.6

When analyzing discipline data, I took the total number of the referrals for the school under study and divided it by the number of AVID students and then by the number of non-AVID students. The AVID student group had 13 total referrals out of the 534 referrals that were

processed. Therefore, the AVID students generated 2% of the total referrals for the school under study. When calculating the non-AVID students, they generated 51 total referrals. Therefore, the non-AVID students generated 98% of the total discipline referrals for the school under study.

When calculating days absent for the 43 AVID students, I found that they missed a total of 875 days. So, dividing the number of AVID students by the days missed, the AVID students missed 4.9% of their school days, while the 573 non-AVID students missed 17,237 total school days. I calculated these numbers to show the non-AVID student group missed 3.3% of school days.

After looking at these data, I researched the possible causes of the AVID students missing more days than the non-AVID students. What I determined was that on the average, the AVID student had honor classes in smaller classes and they were working in groups. Also, I analyzed COVID data and the role it played in absenteeism. The AVID students missed 58 days collectively due to COVID, while the non-AVID students missed 981 days due to COVID. These days included testing positive for COVID and/or being exposed to someone who tested positive. In the beginning of the year, a person testing positive for COVID had to quarantine for 10 days, while those who were exposed had to quarantine for 14 days. During the timeframe of my study, this was the standard.

Teacher Data

The teacher data were qualitative, and I broke them into two parts. The first part of the data was from a survey that included five direct single-answer questions (Likert Scale) and seven open-ended questions. The second portion of the research included 10 interview questions. I asked a total of 18 teachers from the newly accredited middle school and the high school into which the middle school fed to participate in the survey and the interview. Eight teachers

responded to the survey and seven teachers responded to the interview. It should be noted that not every teacher who participated in the survey, also participated in the interview.

Survey. In the first part of the survey, I asked the participants to respond to five statements by choosing if they Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree with them. Statement 1 was: I was not sure if I wanted to become part of the AVID System when I was approached. Three out of the eight Strongly Disagreed, one Disagreed, three Agreed, and one Strongly Agreed.

Statement 2 was: I felt very lost and confused at the beginning of the year. Two participants selected Disagree. Five participants Agreed, and one Strongly Agreed. I would note at this time, that the AVID Summer Institute did not take place as usual, due to COVID. As an alternative, the institute was held via Big Blue Button, an online platform. The in-depth training, student testimonials, and networking that normally goes along with the “in-person” participation did not take place and may have impacted the participants’ answers to Statement 2 or other parts of the survey.

Statement 3 was: I believe the AVID System is a benefit to my students. One participant disagreed. Six participants agreed, and one participant strongly agreed with the statement.

Statement 4 was: I believe that the AVID System has helped me become a better teacher. One teacher replied that they disagreed. Four participants agreed, and three strongly agreed.

The fifth statement was: As a result of becoming an AVID Teacher, I am more positive for my students and my peers. Two participants disagreed. Three agreed and three strongly agreed that they were more positive (see Table 3).

Table 3*Survey Question/Statement Responses*

Question/Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I was not sure if I wanted to become part of the AVID System when I was approached.	3	1	3	1
2. I felt very lost and confused at the beginning of the year	0	2	5	1
3. I believe the AVID System is a benefit to my students.	0	1	2	5
4. I believe that the AVID System has helped me become a better teacher.	0	1	4	3
5. As a result of becoming an AVID Teacher, I am more positive for my students and my peers.	0	2	3	3

The next portion of the survey consisted of open-ended questions to which the participants were able to express themselves as completely as possible (see Tables 4, 5, and 6).

Table 4*Open-ended Survey Questions Responses: Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3*

Question	Teacher 1	Teacher 2	Teacher 3
How many years have you been teaching?	24	15.5	3
6. Advantages of AVID	Organization	Give students a level playing field with other students.	Engages students in activities. Gives students a sense of belonging.

7. Disadvantages of AVID	Not Answered	Definite distinction between AVID and non-AVID students.	Lack of support from veteran teachers.
8. Do you believe that becoming part of AVID has helped you become a better teacher?	Yes. More awareness of strategies to encourage collaboration. Organization	No. Many of the strategies I know from teaching reading. Helps in regular classes.	Yes. Avid hold me accountable to provide rigorous instruction to ALL students.
9. Are you satisfied with teaching after your first year of AVID? Why or why not?	I like the AVID Strategies. I find it difficult to get the non-AVID students to get on board with the binder. All students need to go through the AVID class.	No Answer	Yes. AVID has provided a “shell” of opportunity as an educator.
10. What benefits, if any, have you seen in regards to your student in AVID?	Some students have done a good job at acclimating to AVID and those students have made it easier for themselves to be more successful in school.	They have become more organized and responsible. They will self-advocate for themselves more than the non-AVID students.	At this point, none.
11. Will you continue in AVID? Why or why not?	I have always been for the concepts of AVID before I knew about AVID. Now there is a program to help more teachers and therefore help more students.	I will because I believe in the strategies and because I teach a core academic class.	Yes. I want to help AVID change the culture of our school.
12. If you have to continue AVID because it is implemented in your school, how do you feel about that?	AVID is just good teaching and should be used whether you are AVID or not!	Our school is trying to become an AVID Model School and this is exciting!	It is just starting at our school, so it is all new.
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?	Put all student in AVID!!!	If funding would get to be where it needs to be, then more schools could experience the advantages of AVID. Class size could be adjusted so that it could work all the time.	No Answer

Table 5

Open-ended Survey Questions Responses: Teacher 4, Teacher 5, and Teacher 6

Question	Teacher 4	Teacher 5	Teacher 6
How many years have you been teaching?	27	13	6
6. Advantages of AVID	Teacher become more effective. Students become more successful	Students develop personal responsibility. Circumstances do NOT define them!	Strong learning environment for entire school. Exposes students to advanced classes.

7. Disadvantages of AVID	Takes away an elective.	Not every student hears the positive. No time in core classes to emphasize AVID.	Implementation of program is lengthy and requires everyone to participate.
8. Do you believe that becoming part of AVID has helped you become a better teacher?	Not really. I already use strategies, but I think more about WICOR implementation.	No. I am having a hard time seeing a value in it so far.	I do have more ideas, more concept of purpose. No time. Deflated the balloon. Feel some satisfaction.
9. Are you satisfied with teaching after your first year of AVID? Why or why not?	No. I am having a hard time seeing the value in it so far.	Hard to tell due to COVID. Some people deflated the balloon. More concept of my purpose. I feel some satisfaction.	Yes. Many of the strategies I have been able to expand on how to teach and I am satisfied with the engagement in my classes.
10. What benefits, if any, have you seen in regards to your students in the AVID Program?	My students are more organized and generally more successful.	Some students have bought into self-motivation. They realize what we are doing is important for future. Hard work can overcome deficits. Change one kid it is worth it.	More ownership by students. Allowed for more rigor and engagement in the classroom.
11. Will you continue in AVID? Why or why not?	I will continue to use focused notes, WICOR, but not the elective. AVID Strategies are sound strategies.	There is more buy-in with this program than we have had in the past. It truly causes you to reflect and action within the administration with this program.	Yes, I whole heartedly agree with AVID and our school's mission statement. I will continue to reflect on my own teaching to help students.
12. If you have to continue AVID because it is implemented in your school, how do you feel about that?	I will be part of the program as long as it is at my school	AVID is changing our culture. Teachers and students are buying into the program.	AVID is an everlasting journey that requires the school to continually reflect and adapt to ensure we are effectively implementing the program.
13. Is there anything else you would like to add to this survey?	I see more value in the AVID elective for younger students and not so much for secondary students	he implementation of AVID has been done more faithfully than other initiatives, but it is still imperfect. Current circumstances have contributed to this. I think we could either look at other schools for examples of long-term strategies that work.	Thank you for all your hard work, support, and defending us, our students, and the program!

Table 6*Open-ended Survey Questions Responses: Teacher 7 and Teacher 8*

Question	Teacher 7	Teacher 8
How many years have you been teaching?	24	19
6. Advantages of AVID?	Organization. Learn how to take notes and use them effectively. Learn all about hard work and	AVID is good teaching. Students learn to take responsibility for learning and do more of the work. Learning strategies are wonderful!

	dedication. Form a network of peers to last a lifetime.	
7. Disadvantages of AVID?	Only open to the “middle” kids and everyone	Time Management can be an issue.
8. Do you believe that becoming part of AVID has helped you become a better teacher?	Yes. Students have to change according to the world around them. I have to be flexible with instruction and to be a life-long learner to meet the need of my students and model learning	Yes. It brings attention to the techniques I have used all along and shows me different ways to implement them to help all my students.
9. Are you satisfied with teaching after your first year of AVID? Why or why not?	This is my first year in AVID. I am always looking for new strategies or a new look to the ones that I am already using.	Yes. It helps me stay on the standards and students are working mores and me less lecturing and talking.
10. What benefits, if any, have you seen in regards to your students in the AVID?	Better organized. Collaboration activities have been successful even with the most reluctant student. Some are not involved in AVID but are benefitting from the engagement and learning strategies.	Right now, I need to talk with my team and look at the data.
11. Will you continue in AVID? Why or why not?	Yes, I will continue to as AVID has been implemented school wide and I do see a <u>massive</u> benefit for the students as a whole.	Yes, we are an AVID School. I already use some of the techniques but need to learn more and continue to practice keeping my teaching fresh.
12. If you have to continue AVID because it is implemented in your school, how do you feel about that?	No Answer	No Answer
13. Is there anything else you would like to add to this survey?	I still don’t know why we cannot use AVID for our most needy students. We are using data gleamed from a state test to further divide the “have” and the “have nots.”	No Answer

Interviews. As a researcher, I wanted to identify what types of trainings and support teachers had while being part of AVID. Many of the teachers who attended the AVID Summer Institute were impressed by the testimonials of current and former AVID students, as well as the group discussions with AVID teachers and AVID Center staff. These teachers repeatedly informed those new to AVID that they needed to attend the Summer Institute in person. However, due to COVID, this was not a possibility and AVID Center provided an alternative to

the institute via Big Blue Button, an open-source web conferencing system. From there, some of the trainings that teachers took related directly to AVID, were collaborative and involved backward planning with AVID team members, learning how to read and digest data, AVID coaching, teaching strategies, and implementation of strategies for student engagement.

Looking at the training involved over the summer, teachers indicated they loved the summer institute called AVID DigitalXP, even on Big Blue Button. Teachers in attendance stated that it was the best system/training that they had attended. Teachers found it overwhelming and so much to take in at once that they were still trying to select which strategies worked for them and were fine-tuning them. Others had never heard of AVID and were excited to learn about it. They still felt like they did not have enough time to implement strategies but enjoyed all the information and help on the website. One teacher indicated they felt that it was commercialized but also felt inspired by the trainings and the website. The training sessions were interactive and intense.

A teacher who attended the summer institute exclaimed, “You couldn’t sit in your seat, but you HAD to get up and participate.” Another teacher stated, “My whole instruction has changed! I love the interactive notebook and WICOR strategies. I don’t know how I lived without AVID!” Another teacher found the summer institute difficult as they were “old school” and needed face-to-face training. However, they saw a benefit in the strategies and enjoyed helping teachers with the strategies that were not part of the initial AVID strategies they used.

The consensus from the teachers I interviewed was positive. Other points that teachers expressed after teaching with AVID strategies included the teachers enjoyed working with the “bubble” students, which included the students who were in the academic middle, and the teachers felt teaching bubble students kept them fresh and on point to what students were

thinking and what was important to them. The teachers thought these students could do so much more than they had in the past if given the chance and AVID was providing that opportunity. Some teachers were using strategies but did not have a name for the strategies and AVID helped them label their strategies. They felt validated in what they were doing in the classroom. The teachers and students saw a value in the coaching aspect of the elective and teachers enjoyed seeing students taking responsibility for their own learning and helping their peers as well. Teachers felt validated when their non-AVID trained peers were learning new strategies and then using them in their classroom and finding that they too were enjoying the classroom more than before.

Now that teachers had been teaching with AVID strategies in mind, I asked them what specifically they liked about AVID. Teachers said they felt that in the beginning it was a struggle to get students to develop and use problem solving skills to answer their own questions, but when students started to lean on each other and their own abilities, it was very gratifying and allowed the teachers to concentrate on other deficiencies in the classroom. AVID strategies could be tailored for individual teacher needs as well as the individual needs of the student. One teacher stated, “My first year of teaching I hated teaching but stayed because I liked the students.” Now they found value in teaching and enjoyed a supportive team of teachers that they did not have the first year (note: this teacher was in the same school both years).

Another teacher stated, “Thanks to teaching the AVID elective, I am now rejuvenated and have fallen back in love with teaching. It is much easier to find strategies to use in the classroom without spending hours searching online. The videos and other supports on the website are extremely helpful.” Teachers interviewed enjoyed that there is a school wide

initiative and appreciate the “shared language” across the school from one classroom to another. Teachers enjoyed WICOR and felt that it helped them plan to meet the needs of all students.

Other teachers were skeptical at first but started to feel more at ease with letting students choose how to take notes, direct their own instruction, and take ownership in learning. Empowering students ultimately empowered them as teachers. Another teacher liked the mindset of the AVID system. Students were not expected to just graduate, but to do something after graduation. AVID also encouraged the three E’s, Employment, Enlistment, and Education, which was a new directive from the district under study.

Teachers found that helping students become more organized was a definite benefit. At first the teachers were concerned with all the “front loading” that was taking place, but once it became second nature, students found more time to be present in the lesson, could find assignments much faster, and teachers found that students were more prepared for class. Teachers liked that students were held accountable for their learning and actions. Teachers enjoyed seeing the “under privileged” students being successful in a realm that they never even considered entering. Overall, teachers felt that the students and the teachers involved in AVID were a family.

Along with the likes, I was curious to see what teachers disliked about AVID. The main issue I found among the high school teachers in my study was they felt the elective was a deterrent to AVID as it took away from other interests. AVID students, as part of the system, had to be enrolled in the AVID elective. This did not leave room in the students’ schedules for another elective based on a six-period day for AVID students. The high school teachers were also discouraged by the lack of time in the classroom to initially train the students to use their notebooks and to teach the students different learning strategies. This concern was also expressed

by the middle school teachers in my study. A teacher also stated that there was no fidelity with the teachers throughout the school and felt that the AVID site team was the main focus.

One teacher felt that trying to launch school-wide AVID strategies without everyone on board was difficult. The teacher indicated they felt bad for the students with lower academic levels, as they felt they were left out of the process. A teacher suggested trainings could be held during school hours for the entire team instead of trainings during the summer and during after-school hours. The teacher felt as if they were being taken advantage of versus given time during the school day to be trained. One teacher felt that students who were not meeting the minimal requirements for AVID, such as grades and behavior, should not be allowed to remain in the AVID elective and be removed and then replaced by another student who would be more appreciative of the opportunity.

That teacher stated, “It seems to be that the district and the schools are out of alignment when considering school needs and the district’s expectations.” Although they felt that the meetings were important, three out of the seven teachers indicated they felt that the number of meetings that were held were overwhelming, as teams would meet every other week. They felt that some meetings could be divided so that certain grade levels were discussed on different days or have them on one day, but only discussing the most serious cases of student progress and not the ones that “may” become an issue. The teachers indicated an email would suffice regarding potential concerns, and teachers could report back the conversations they had held with those students.

Researching teacher satisfaction, I asked study participants if they would recommend AVID strategies to a teacher who was burned out, having difficulty with student performance, and very negative about the profession. The majority of the answers to this question were that

participants would not recommend AVID to such teachers. The reasons participants offered were that a teacher who was truly burned out should leave the profession and find another way to earn a living, and a burned-out teacher was not good for the school or the students.

When considering a teacher who was struggling, one teacher stated, “It depends on why they were struggling. Is it a classroom management problem? If it is, then they need assistance in class management. If it is a student achievement issue, then I would definitely recommend AVID and help to mentor them.” Teachers felt that if a teacher wanted to improve themselves in teaching and would buy into AVID, it would greatly benefit not only the teacher but their students as well.

Teachers indicated they thought using AVID strategies would change the climate of the class. The strategies were rigorous and would lead to student engagement. Students would learn more during engagement and that teacher would start to see a change for the better. When the students started taking responsibility for their own learning, they used internal skills for inquiry and developed the process for finding solutions. Buy-in was important and taking the struggling teacher to a conference, playing student success stories on the website, or even having current students at the school give their testimonials, could be a great motivator to turn that teacher around. Another teacher felt that AVID put the “human element” back into education, where teachers had been used to seeing test scores, they now were starting to see students as people.

At the end of the interviews, I asked each teacher if they had anything to add in regard to AVID. A teacher responded, “AVID gave me a reason to bond, not only with other teachers and administrators but with the students as well.” Another teacher stated, “My students feel safe to take risks, are becoming leaders, have made friends with other students that they never would never have even spoken to prior to AVID, students had a change of attitude, and students became

more accepting of others.” Another teacher stated, “I am excited to see the students change their mindset and realize there is more out there for them than doing minimal wage jobs.”

The teachers were excited to see where the future would take the AVID elective students. Teachers had seen changes for the better, not only with the students but with other teachers as well. They had found the time to talk with students and not at them. One teacher summed it up completely by stating, “Success breeds success!”

As-Is Analysis

The As-Is Analysis for the research falls into four categories: Context, Conditions, Culture, and Competencies. The primary question, “Can the AVID system be a benefit for students?” is what I based my research on to determine if AVID could benefit students in a rural Title I school. During the study, a problem arose with scheduling in the Master Schedule (system in which courses are chosen, how often they are offered during the school day, and what teacher is teaching them). The middle school under study was the smallest school in the district under study. Therefore, the school had many teachers who taught multiple grade levels and even multiple subjects. For example, one teacher taught three classes of sixth-grade social studies and two classes of eighth-grade science. Previously, the advanced classes were small allowing for one teacher to teach all the advanced students in one or two periods during the day. However, due to AVID students having to take at least one honors course, the classes were larger than they had been previously (10-15 students).

As-Is Context

The context of my research was to study a Title I School with a small faculty and staff (under 40). The middle school under study had only 8th graders in AVID during the 2018-2019 school year and included students from all of the grades, sixth, seventh, and eighth during the

2019-2020 school year. The high school under study received the 8th graders who attended the middle school under study from 2018-2019 into the high school in the 2019-2020 school year, which was the first year of AVID implementation at the high school. Teachers working with the incoming ninth graders received their first AVID training in the summer of 2020, prior to the start of the school year. However, due to COVID-19, the training was all done via Big Blue Button and not in person. The middle school under study trained along with the high school during the 2020 summer sending teachers to AVID Summer Institute who had attended the Summer Institute the previous summer.

As-Is Conditions

I conducted my study in Title I schools – one middle school and one high school. Prior to AVID becoming part of the school, if a student didn't score a three or higher on the SCAT for science (State Comprehensive Assessment Test) and three or higher on the SA (Standards Assessment) for English, math, or history, advanced classes were not offered to that student. Providing honor classes in the master schedule and highly qualified teachers along with providing support classes for AVID, caused stress on a tight schedule and already limited resources with a small staff.

As-Is Culture

With the introduction of AVID, there was a shift in culture at the schools under study. The culture and climate had been to prepare students for high school or college. Now, there was a mind shift to include the 3Es. Instead of preparing students for just high school or college, the schools under study focused on preparing students for further Education, Employment, or Enlistment (3Es). There was a push for advanced studies and with that supporting both students and parents with a “You Can” attitude. A community around AVID was forming and students

along with parents and the community began to feel more comfortable with trying higher academics and making plans for the future.

As-Is Competencies

Competencies were under development and improvements were being made in the selection process for students and more importantly how to assist students that were not meeting the minimal requirements to be a part of AVID. In order to become an AVID Elective student, the student had to complete an application process with the parent's input and approval. The application was handed to students who met the requirements to be enrolled in AVID. The student had to be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch indicating low socioeconomic status, had earned a Level 2 out of 5 on SA, and the parents had not attended a post-secondary educational institution. This was the process that the middle school under study used to select students for AVID. The goal was to reduce the opportunity gap for students of low socioeconomic backgrounds. According to AVID Center (History of AVID, 2018b), 76% of AVID seniors come from low socioeconomic backgrounds and 86% are underrepresented students. However, 94% complete a four-year college, 90% apply and are accepted into a four-year college, and 84% enrolled in college persist into their second year demonstrating college readiness.

There was a concern about training teachers on how to use AVID strategies. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 AVID Summer Institute was not offered in person, and the training took place online. The teachers who went the previous year stated that the online version just was not the same, and the online training lacked the excitement of the previous year's in-person training. As a result, the trainings were often left to the AVID lead teacher to facilitate. One lead teacher was in their second year and the other was in their first. To add to the workload, both leads also

taught other classes and were not full-time AVID leads. Another issue was the possible lack of buy-in by all the teachers. In order for the AVID system to work effectively in the schools, all teachers have to buy into the system and support the system. My research showed that there was some concern in this area. For the most part, teachers were buying-in, but some teachers were still missing the point of the system as they thought it should be offered to every student, while others believed that the AVID elective class should only be offered in elementary and saw very little use for the elective at the secondary level.

Conclusion

In Chapter Five, I will discuss how I used the information and data that I gathered to further move the district into having more AVID schools. I will lay out a vision for future successes and social factors. I will also discuss economic factors and finally offer a conclusion for the purpose of AVID as a district strategy.

Chapter Five: To-Be Framework

Through my program evaluation of AVID Systems in two Title I rural community secondary schools, I found that students participating in the AVID elective performed better on Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessments (QSMA), had a better attendance rate, and had fewer referrals, as compared to their non-AVID elective peers. I also discovered that teachers who were participating in AVID had a change in job satisfaction and a renewed sense of belonging and purpose.

Envisioning the Success To-Be

My vision of the To-Be for AVID in all secondary schools in the district under study includes context, conditions, culture, and competencies (please see Appendix D) (Wagner et al., 2006). In my To-Be organizational analysis, school and district leaders will realize the benefits of implementing the AVID College and Career Readiness System in every school, not only for the students but for the teachers as well. The district and school leaders will be able to understand the benefits of AVID for teacher morale and increased student achievement. The community will realize there are many benefits to supporting the schools. The parents will receive the additional support they need to assist their children to progress after high school.

Future Contexts

Social factors that were taking place in AVID schools involved the parents as well as the community. According to research (AVID Center, 2018a), parents who did not experience a post-secondary education had little understanding of how to research colleges, did not have the ability to understand the application processes, did not have the ability to guide their children through secondary school, and had very little understanding of how to financially provide post-secondary education for their children. AVID provides strategies that close the gap in the

parents' understanding of post-secondary education. Parents are supported by their guidance counselors and AVID coordinators in one-on-one settings and by providing parent nights to assist parents in understanding what their child is doing academically and how they will be working together to get the students to the 3Es (Enrollment, Enlistment, or Employment). By closing this gap, the community benefits by having students who are better prepared for their futures and become better citizens of the community, and thereby, relieving the stress on social programs and government-funded operations to provide for them.

Another ideal context will be the reduction of resources needed to support community members who could then be used to support the schools by freeing up resources such as persons, time, and finances. Once students are highly qualified to fill jobs in the community either by having industry certification and having highly required skills upon graduating high school or post-secondary education, businesses and industry should recognize that as a benefit to them. Thereby, they will be more willing to provide supplies, tutoring, mentoring, and assistance in AVID at the schools. This will form a tight bond between the community and the school.

A part of the AVID system is to prepare students for the post-secondary world. By educating students, and teaching them to advocate and think for themselves, the district will be able to save resources that would have been spent on prep-type classes, as now AVID elective students would have that opportunity through the AVID coursework. Title I, Part A, provides local educational agencies (LEA) resources that help children gain a high-quality education and the skills to master the State Standards. Title I funding provides additional resources to schools with economically disadvantaged students. These resources provide additional teachers, professional development for teachers, extra time for teaching, parent involvement activities, and other activities designed to raise student achievement. Two models will be used in Title I schools

to provide these services: schoolwide reform models provide access to services and targeted assistance models provide services to selected students in Title I schools (Citation withheld to protect confidentiality).

Future Culture

Participation in the AVID elective develops a sense of belonging among teachers to teachers, teachers to students, and students to students. Formal and informal leaders will need to continue to support AVID at the district, school, and community levels. As part of the “You Can” attitude, teachers will need to continue training, attend the AVID Summer Institute, and the school will need to re-certify its AVID system. Research indicated that when there is a sense of belonging and employees feel valued, they are more likely to stay in the workplace (Kim & Loadman, 1994). AVID students completing upper-level courses and earning certifications will earn extra points for schools to assist in earning a higher grade under the State School Evaluative System. Schools that improve on their school grade or score a rating of A, receive additional funding from the state Department of Education. As school grades improve, so does that of the district, bringing in even more funding and recognition.

Parents and the community will become more proactive in the schools, and therefore, more involved in the school and the educational support of the school. AVID elective students will provide statements of success and transformation for AVID as well as the school and be able to speak on behalf of the district regarding what being an AVID student brought to them and why it should continue to have support. This will develop the “You Can” attitude for students. What better incentive is there than to hear from the students themselves about how their lives and the lives of their families changed due to AVID?

Future Conditions

In the district that I studied, the high school had six periods, and the middle school had seven periods of classes in a day. For the middle school, the seven-period day allowed the opportunity for students to enroll in an extra elective and also gave teachers an opportunity to plan during the day. The AVID elective could be added and still allow students to take another elective or another honors course. Teachers would teach six periods a day with one planning period during the day. This was different at the high school, as only incoming freshmen, and a few sophomores could fit the AVID elective into their schedule and could not take another elective. When considering the high school schedule and continuing with six-period days, it would relieve the stress on the schedule to build a rotating schedule. For example, AVID students would be split into two groups, A and B. AVID students in group A would take the AVID elective on even days, and another elective (semester course) on odd days and vice versa for the students in group B. This schedule could also be considered when planning for students taking required reading courses. These students were in the same boat as far as elective course opportunities went as they did not have an elective because reading classes took up one to two periods daily. Giving these students the ability to have an elective may give them the incentive to come to school. With this schedule, one could also build in math support classes to assist those students who need extra help in addition to their regularly scheduled math class, and the students would still have time in their schedule to take an elective course.

Part of the conditions with the AVID elective is that every AVID student must enroll in an honors/advanced core course. In smaller schools, like the one under study, this may cause a strain on the master schedule. With a smaller group of teachers and smaller course sections

offered, scheduling may be difficult. A plan that I will put in place will schedule the honors courses, per grade level, at separate times during the day, and they will not conflict with the AVID elective. At a lower grade level, this may be easier than the upper grades, due to electives and other courses that will be required by upper-level grades, especially as students want to complete career and dual enrolled courses. The schedule will have to be developed to make certain that students are able to enroll in the required courses.

Every secondary school in the district will provide the AVID College and Career Readiness System. Schools introducing AVID will start at the highest grade level to feed the next school and then implement the other grades the next year. This will allow for a smaller group of teachers to work with a group of students and build from there allowing for growth pains. Those teachers then should be able to sell the system to the next group of teachers as well as the eighth-grade AVID students talking to their classmates. According to AVID Center (2022), it may be difficult to initiate AVID in high school as the beginning of implementing AVID due to the constraints of electives. Therefore, the ideal condition would be to start AVID at elementary, and therefore, AVID students would continue the growth process as they continue through school.

Future Competencies

Staff development and training will be crucial in order for the implementation of AVID to be successful. Ideally, one would want all core and AVID elective teachers trained first and then filter the training down to other electives. Teachers will need to receive additional support and follow-up training needs to occur throughout the year. In the district under study, teachers are given what is called “half-days” that are used for professional development. These days should be utilized to demonstrate teaching strategies and techniques, as well as update teachers. When schools have new teachers appointed and they are not trained in AVID strategies, these

teachers will need to go through the process as well and be given an AVID teacher mentor, especially if they are in the core subject areas.

Funding for AVID is expensive, especially when considering the cost of teachers attending summer institutes for training. The teachers will be required to be reimbursed for travel, registration, room, and board. Ideally, every core teacher should be able to attend the institute for training, followed by new teachers and elective teachers the following year. However, in today's economy, especially in the state under study, tax monies were not collected at the same rate as usual years due to COVID-19. To counteract that loss of funding, for everyone to be trained, I will have the AVID elective teacher along with one core teacher from each grade level attend the institute. Those teachers can then return to the school and instruct the other teachers in AVID strategies, especially during the scheduled half days. Teachers could also utilize the AVID website at www.avid.org, to see examples, models, and videos of the strategies being used.

Students who are selected need to be selected according to the requirements of the AVID elective. Often data and successes are skewed due to not following the procedures set in place. Students need to be Level 2 students on the SA and parents not from a post-secondary background, to name two requirements. Students will need to buy into AVID, and as the system advances, their peers will definitely be helpful to recruit needed students.

In order to place AVID elective students appropriately, administrators and counselors at the school level will need to look at the test scores and interests of the AVID students. As part of AVID, each student must be enrolled in at least one honors/advanced course. The course must be in the four academic cores (math, ELA, science, or social studies). Administrators will need to have conversations with AVID elective students to determine their interest in one of the four

courses to help assist that student in the proper placement for success. Administrators will also need to assure that there are enough of these courses available for the AVID students as well as the students who would typically sign up for these courses, which is done by setting up the master schedule (list of classes being taught and when they are taught within the school day).

As in every initiative, continued training and refreshers will be needed to keep teachers abreast of strategies and to review portions of AVID that may have been moved to the back burner. My research found that many of the teachers were overwhelmed at the beginning of the year. As these teachers become more comfortable using certain strategies, they will be more apt to take on more strategies and different aspects of AVID. Each year these teachers should move forward and become more comfortable in taking on more AVID responsibilities. As this occurs, these teachers will become ambassadors for AVID and should assist in teachers buying into AVID.

As part of AVID, administrators at school sites, should also not only be familiar with what the teachers are going through with AVID but should also be invested in training at the administrative level. This type of training would help in further understanding of AVID and will allow for further support of the teachers and the students. AVID administrative training will allow the administrators to get ideas and support with tying in students, parents, teachers, and the community.

Engaging stakeholders is the main factor in planning and managing the success of change. The community and parents are a huge part of AVID and will need to be recruited and supported during the process. Often change is made without going through the process of including all stakeholders and only concentrating on just the teachers and the students. However, the outside stakeholders (community, religious leaders, businesses, etc.) do have an impact on

change more than leaders may think. A leader-manager who is a coach rather than a giver of orders, a listener rather than a lecturer, a colleague rather than a superior, a supporter rather than a critic will be rewarded with engaged employees, a committed team, and strong results (Bevan, 2015, p. 45).

Conclusion

In chapter six, I will discuss possible strategies and actions for change. Change is needed in order to help students succeed at all levels. AVID meets the needs of students who are the ones who often “fall through the cracks” of the education system due to being the group that gets mass loaded during scheduling. These students come from low socioeconomic families, do not have parents that have a post-secondary education, and are not academically “pushed” into taking advanced-level course(s).

Chapter Six: Strategies and Actions for Change

When I reviewed the context, conditions, culture, and competencies of the “As-Is” 4Cs Analysis diagram (Appendix C), along with my “Vision of Success To Be” diagram (Appendix D) (Wagner et al., 2006), I realized that AVID can be successful at any school if there is a sincere and strategic effort to weave the ideals into the culture of the school and community. This may take a mind shift in the way the school and community think and the goals they set for the success of their students. The school stakeholders, along with the community stakeholders, will have to buy into the philosophy of AVID. AVID in part, is putting researched-based teaching strategies into practice, but it also provides support for the student and for the parent in planning the future goals of the student. In this way, the student has more control over their choices, thereby advocating for themselves, which may be very different from the way a school runs typically. The next step is for me to identify research-based strategies for school and district-level administrators to help stakeholders buy into AVID to make those changes.

According to Richard Bevan (2015), there are ten steps to making a change in your organization as defined in his book *The Changemaking Checklists*. Reviewing these steps and putting them into practice will clarify the strategies and actions process of the introduction and implementation of AVID in the schools and the district in which my study was conducted (Appendix E). The remaining portion of this chapter will be dedicated to explaining these steps to assist administrators in implementing the AVID College and Career Readiness System.

Step 1: Clarity

In this step, all stakeholders completely understand the purpose behind the change, how it will be implemented, and the approach that will be taken to make the change. In this step, everyone understands the purpose, and therefore, stakeholders will not be able to make

assumptions about the system as a whole. Change is complex, and therefore, may present a conflict within the organization as at first, the plan may seem too big of a challenge with little benefit for all the work that it will take to make the change. Failure to resolve this conflict is one of the major reasons that change initiatives often fail. It has been my experience as a 29-year veteran of education, that educators start an initiative, only to abandon it four years later for the “newest” program in education or as a new administration is put in place. Not being clear and concise about AVID, the benefits, the purpose, and the plan to implement will cause the same result. Employees and even leaders sometimes go through the steps of change without any dedication to the purpose behind the change. They appease those initiating the change, but do not really make the change. In order to make the change consistently in focus, the leader(s) must keep reassuring their members of the outcome toward which they are working. The district and school-based leaders will need to focus on those participants who see the need for the change and support their needs as much as possible. The leader(s) must be aware of the signs of discourse, burn-out, and exhaustion. The leader(s) will need to be compassionate and understanding, but at the same time keep the participants focused on the change (Bevan, 2015).

The reality in making change is that stakeholders will often make assumptions about the change and the assumptions will often be wrong (Bevan, 2015, p. 17). In order to assure clarity for change, leaders must keep the group moving forward to assure success. Warren Bennis noted that “Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality” (Bevan, 2015, p. 21). To ensure that AVID becomes established, the vision and mission will be posted throughout the school, on notes that are taken during meetings, and spoken during announcements, and all meetings and discussions will stay focused on the mission. The principal needs to keep the goals in mind and keep those goals at the forefront of the stakeholders. The leader needs to keep an ear open to the

members and be able to re-focus the group back to the purpose of why the change is needed and the outcomes of making the change.

Step 2: Measurement

In this step the organization will focus on the measurement of success, identifying clear objectives, and effective measurement systems in planning and action to create and sustain change. The setting of measurable goals enables the assessment of results and implementation of necessary course corrections (Bevan, p. 12). When looking at this step, the leader must find people who are influential in the function of the school, especially those teachers who are already leaders. The purpose behind AVID is to support students who are not honor students, nor the lower 25% of the student body, but rather those students who are from a lower socioeconomic background with parents who do not have a post-secondary education. Comparing data from similar schools that have initiated AVID with data from the same type of schools will give stakeholders the baseline information that they will need to measure success and develop clear objectives for AVID. As teachers become more familiar with AVID and develop skills with the teaching strategies, provide support for the students, and involve the parents and community in the success of AVID, more students will become successful and advocate for themselves. Schools will start to recognize the benefits of AVID for all stakeholders.

When measuring the success of the AVID system, one must remember that the system is designed to assist students who would have never been considered for post-secondary education to be placed in the position to not only be considered but to actually be successful in post-secondary education. As such, the measurement of success will be to track students to determine if AVID elective students did enroll in post-secondary education. To identify the success of the

AVID students, a 90% placement rate in post-secondary education will be the measure to indicate the success of the system.

In secondary schools, AVID success will be measured by AVID students scoring higher on standardized tests than their peers by at least 3% in the first year and growing by 5% for every successive year until graduation. Success will also be measured by AVID elective students participating in advanced/honors courses and graduating high school with plans for post-secondary education, complete with applications, scholarships, and financial aid statements.

Step 3: Engagement

In the engagement step, the organization will be forming a sense of belonging and commitment among the stakeholders. This will be achieved while also collecting information about issues, questions, and expectations that can guide planning and actions. AVID forms this association naturally by providing support for not only the students and parents but for the teacher as well. AVID brings in every aspect of the school in order to be successful. AVID incorporates students, teachers, parents, community, and administrators in the planning and implementation of AVID. AVID provides an elective where students learn to trust each other, develop a sense of community, and receive the tools to work together.

Students are also part of a tutorial section where graduates and community stakeholders come into the school and work with students. These volunteers attend AVID training on how to tutor students. The basis is to have students work at figuring out for themselves the answers to questions and problems and not be told the answer by the tutor. Tutors are trained on what to ask and how to direct students to discover the process and therefore the answers on their own. A sense of belonging and self-worth may occur for the first time with many of these students.

Along with students trusting each other and forming relationships, the students also see teachers in a different light.

When developing this step, it is important to identify all stakeholders (groups, individuals, and institutions) to develop and be involved in planned changes. These stakeholders can identify future needs and assessments to ensure that needs are met. Students who are enrolled in the AVID elective must also take at least one honors course in the four academic areas. If honors classes are scheduled, the AVID student can enroll in one of those honors courses. However, if there are not any honors classes available or if adding AVID students will overfill the courses, as happened in the school I studied, the school leaders will need to create additional units. This can be done by considering the certifications of teachers in the school or district. The teacher in the position of teaching the AVID elective will also have to fill the position of AVID Coordinator and work toward system development and recruitment. Having everyone involved in developing the AVID system will best meet the needs of the school in developing and assessing the goals as needed. In the AVID elective, students learn to rely on one another to assist with tutoring, support, and affirmation that the students are working toward a goal.

Step 4: Resources

Resources include everything needed to provide for the development and implementation of the change. This will include finances, technology, human resources, and other incidentals to secure success (Bevan, 2015, p. 12). The financial aspect of AVID can be overwhelming to the district and the school. However, district support with funds is crucial. Leaders can identify other programs that are not operating fully or data show that the program is not effective, and then they can release finances within the same category to be moved to help support AVID. Federal funding can also be allocated to support technology and other resources that will be needed to

support AVID. Grants such as the Federal Cares Act and other funding can be used to provide resources as long as the resources needed fit the requirements of the grant. AVID Center can be a source of funding, especially during the initial start-up of AVID.

Step 4 is important with the development of resources. Involving individuals that can be important to AVID is a fundamental part of resource development. Individuals who hold the ear of the district leaders and play critical roles in crucial financial decisions can also play a pivotable role in the attainment of resources. Most importantly this step is to recognize that there will be costs to managing change. Leaders must be aware that there will be a financial impact in supporting the change. Workload adjustments, trainings, and additional human resources will be addressed in this step.

Students will need technology and leaders will have to plan accordingly. Laptops, Chromebooks, or other technological devices will be part of the planned resources. Along with the tangible technology, the school will provide enough broadband to support these devices at school as well as provide assistance to families that may not have Wi-Fi in the home. The implementation of AVID will require a coordinator to be established at each school, which will add to the cost of human resources and should be considered during the initial planning phase. Additional human resources will include teachers and paraprofessionals.

When considering the school I studied, one of the afterthoughts that were discussed was to have an AVID resource room specifically for AVID parents located at the school. In my plan for the future, this will be implemented to allow parents to use the computers and have access to a person who can assist them with completing financial documents, accessing tutoring for both the parent and the student, and having community resources easily available for the parent. The operating hours of the AVID resource room will be different from school hours to accommodate

parents' work schedules. Leaders will expect to have to address concerns and needed improvements, such as the resource room, as the change is taking place. The key is to recognize them, problem solve, and not let them stop the forward movement of the change and the process. Too many times as a group is moving towards change, other resources are accounted for, but the human resource aspect is often neglected, thereby causing the change to lack support and fail. By keeping this in mind and planning as much detail as possible, unexpected strains on resources can be overcome much easier and can help ensure the success of the change.

Step 5: Alignment

Alignment means to offer ideas and tools for ensuring that the key functions, systems, and processes (e.g., sales, rewards, information, accounting, manufacturing, training) support the change. Often the support for the change process and the systems are often overlooked (Bevan, 2015, p. 12). AVID provides solid researched-based teaching strategies to encourage students to become aware of the educational process and become responsible for their own learning. This is a huge mind shift in many schools as teachers often “preach” and students become used to being “spoon-fed.” As such, teachers will need additional support in the form of community, modeling, a peer who will listen, and administrators who will offer support and assistance when shifting toward the change.

AVID strategies need to be aligned to the curriculum and teaching strategies need to be implemented to best serve the students in learning and mastering the curriculum. Students will not be learning more nor will teachers be teaching differently for standards that are not aligned with the curriculum. Simply, students will be learning to take ownership of their education and teachers will be supportive in allowing and encouraging students to do so.

Step 6: Leadership

Bevan (2015, p. 12) reviewed the nature of effective and committed leadership and the role of leaders and managers in making change, and provided guidance on preparing, coaching, and supporting leader-managers. When implementing AVID, leaders must look at informal teacher leaders to assist with implementing the change from teacher-centered instruction to student-led instruction. Teachers giving up “power” and holding students responsible will be a mind shift for many educators and may have some resistance from teachers. As AVID becomes more assimilated into the culture of the school, leaders will direct the change but have teachers, students, and parents involved in the change. Leaders will provide support and encouragement as AVID takes hold in the culture and the instruction of the school. Leaders can direct initiatives and provide support to all, but not take responsibility for success, but take responsibility for failure.

Step 7: Communication

Communication will include the process in which the group will talk and share information among themselves, other stakeholders, and those who need information. Data should be openly shared with teachers, students, and parents, as well as the community. The depth of data shared will depend on the audience. For example, a student needs to be concerned with their individual data, while a teacher will need to look at the individual as well as all the other students. Often when change is occurring, the group working with the change will tend to go more inward and work in isolation. By doing this, the focus becomes narrowed and limits the success of the change that was originally set. This is important for the leader to recognize, and they must strive to keep communication open and flowing from the bottom up and the top down.

It is important for the group to establish a system of communication and the process by which it is to occur. As AVID is changing the culture, it will be important to establish meeting dates for the year and hold them sacred. From the school-level meetings, information needs to be shared at the district level. This can be done by giving the district AVID coordinator the school's meeting dates so that they may attend. This may be difficult for the district person to attend every meeting, but notes can be recorded and shared with the coordinator and the other stakeholders as well. Continual gathering of student samples, grades, attendance, discipline, and scores, will also help the team direct meetings to assess the goals that were originally set. By doing this the team will stay true to their original goals and assess where the change is working, and where it will need to be adjusted to continue moving forward.

Step 8: Making Meetings Work

The key to making meetings work is to not waste the time of the members. They need to feel that what they are doing is important and their time is valued. More importantly, the key to a successful and productive meeting is to stay focused on the matter at hand and not to get sidetracked into complaining, discussing outside events, or holding other conversation that does not have to deal with the topic at hand. Bevan (2015) suggested that in order to conduct a productive meeting a pre-meeting activity should occur. During this activity the groundwork can be laid, expectations can be managed and adapted for content, an agenda developed, and leaders can assure the process meets the needs of the change. The agenda and meeting purpose should be prepared by the administration and the school's AVID coordinator, keeping in mind concerns from other stakeholders. During the meeting, the leader should aim to evoke a high level of involvement by all members, with an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving. Feedback is also very important to give to all the participants. This can be done by summarizing the

discussion, answering questions, keeping members on track, allowing ideas to be generated and discussed, researching areas of the unknown, and reporting back with the gained knowledge. All of these steps are important to ensure that members feel the meetings are not a waste of time, but are productive, celebrate successes, and work on the continual process of change.

Step 9: Making Change Peer by Peer

As the title of this step suggests, one might think it is one peer changing another peer to get on board with the change. In actuality, Step 9 deals with the power of social media to inform all stakeholders (teachers, students, parents, community, and administrators) of the change and how it is being processed. When considering changing the school with AVID, school leaders can utilize Twitter, Facebook, and even add the information to the school's and district's websites. This will add to Step 7, the communication process, and it will utilize snippets of information to all. Members can be added easily and groups within the main group can easily share information back and forth. For example, subgroups may include a parent group, student group, or teacher group for more relatable support. These subgroups can share information, tips, and other concerns with each other and feel free to do so. For example, a parent group may feel more comfortable asking questions of other parents, instead of asking in the whole group which would include teachers and administrators. Parents who have gone through the process and have their children in or graduated from college can remain in the group to offer their advice and expertise as they are further in the process.

Step 10: FAQs

This step includes all other needs not mentioned in steps 1 through 9. FAQs provide answers to some of the questions frequently asked about change management that have not been addressed in the main text. This step specializes in the type of change that occurs under different

needs depending on the goals of the group. In this portion of the change process, the leader has to always be clear about the goals and the reasoning behind the change needing to be made, always keep the needs in the forefront, and recognize and understand the gaps in the planning that may hinder change. With AVID, the change is ever flowing depending on the need. All teachers will need training, students need to be interviewed and continually monitored, and teachers and other stakeholders will need to aid students and parents and meet other needs that align with the vision. When the change gets challenging, the leader needs to show empathy and allow members to be open to discuss the challenges that they face and support them with developing solutions. The leader needs to be candid with setbacks and open to not only criticism on how they occurred, but also to accept the ideas of the group to move forward. It will be important to keep things simple. Change can be overwhelming, and the more people involved is a benefit, but left unchecked can be a deterrent to the success of the change.

In this phase of change, there are many resources and a variety of types of information available. The information is best handled in the form of lists. Bevan (2015, p. 13) suggested the following types of lists to assist with keeping information structured.

- *Checklists* suggest actions or items be addressed (e.g., HR programs that should be adjusted to drive and sustain a change).
- *Process guides* list specific steps to achieve a particular goal (e.g., conducting stakeholder assessments).
- *Research guides* list issues to be studied (e.g., achievements against goals, unanticipated obstacles, notable successes).
- *Reference guides* list issues that should be considered and addressed (e.g., pitfalls typically encountered, and tactics to avoid them).

- *Templates* provide examples or models as a starting point on which to build (e.g., core elements of a robust case for change).
- *Talking points* list suggested subjects and a process for meetings or discussions (e.g., a conversation about change and its impact).

AVID has now taken place in the school, and the leader must keep the initiatives of AVID moving forward. Keeping a pulse on the data (academic, attendance, and behavioral) is key to putting interventions in place to further assist students. Having “Data Chats” with students and meeting with them on a regular basis will help the student stay informed of their own progress. Students will be allowed to change their goals as they feel fit, and the one-on-one conversations will keep them grounded in their goals and they will be able to mark off items on their checklist as they meet their individual goals. These data chats will be conducted by individual teachers, counselors, and administrators who have “adopted” those students and mentor them.

Another key point to keep in mind is the community that supports the school. The leaders along with career teachers should maintain contacts within the community. This should be done so that the school keeps a pulse on what the community needs for replacing or adding professionals to the workforce. This information can be shared within the school and students will be more informed on potential careers during goal planning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I recommended 10 steps from Bevan (2015), to help guide the development and implementation of the AVID College and Career Readiness System. Using these steps will help define the need for change, keep change on track for success, and avoid the pitfalls that would prevent change from occurring. In the following chapter, I will focus on the

implications of AVID and policy recommendations to assist one in developing an AVID system at their school or district.

Chapter Seven: Implications and Policy Recommendations

The leaders of the school district will provide the opportunity for all schools within the district to implement AVID. By providing the opportunity to allow every school to be an AVID school, the district will increase the number of students who are preparing for a future in the 3Es (Education, Employment, or Enlistment). At this time, the district under study was emphasizing the 3Es initiative, and AVID allows further development of students being prepared for a plan beyond high school. Teachers have also found a higher satisfaction in their career with students taking ownership of their education and becoming more responsible for their own success through AVID.

Policy Statement

My policy supports and is specific to initiating AVID in all secondary schools within the district under study. The policy supports training for teachers and continued training as the system progresses in each school. Students who meet the minimal requirements to become AVID students will be identified by each school. This provides a pool of potential candidates for AVID. Not every student or parent will want to become a part of AVID. By providing a pool of students, there will be at least an outreach to all students who are eligible, giving everyone the opportunity to become part of AVID. This provides the number of students needed to replenish AVID upon graduation of the seniors. The policy also provides for a district AVID coordinating department to assist schools with the development and operation of AVID.

I recommend this policy because I found in my research and data collection, that AVID does improve the performance of students tested on the QSMA in ELA and math as compared to their peer group. My data collection showed that for all levels of math, with the exception of

Algebra I honors, AVID students scored higher than their non-AVID peers. For ELA, AVID elective students scored higher than their non-AVID peers.

One new AVID high school teacher brought up a temporary concern and said, “We had some issues in the beginning of the year with current AVID elective students not being open and with the new AVID students. It took some time for them to accept the new students.” These ninth graders had been part of AVID for nearly three years in middle school and were already part of a strong community. This is what AVID promotes as a benefit of students, teachers, and the community working together. The ninth graders who were new to AVID were brought into the AVID System as they qualified to become part of AVID but did not come from a middle school that had AVID. However, as the year progressed, the new members that were added as ninth graders, became part of the community.

Another aspect of the policy is the support for teachers. After interviewing several teachers, my data reflected teachers in AVID were more satisfied with student outcomes and the relationship they had with students than they had prior to teaching AVID. Teaching AVID strategies and working with the AVID coordinator and the district AVID liaison will help to provide a safe place for teachers to discuss concerns and work together.

Analysis of Needs

In the following subsections, I analyze my policy recommendations through six arenas of need to assist in supporting the policy proposal that I recommend for the district under study. I look at my policy through the lens of education needs, economic needs, social needs, political needs, legal needs, and ethical issues. By providing this information, I further establish the need for AVID throughout the district in secondary schools.

Educational Analysis

The potential of the average student in the district has been overlooked in support of the honors students and the lower 25% of the student body. AVID takes those students who are in between the honors student and the lower 25%, pushes them, and supports them in the process of advancement in their education. This type of student also comes from a background where their parent(s) might have no post-secondary education. The research I conducted showed that the AVID elective students scored higher on district assessments covering three nine-week periods over their non-AVID elective peers. For example, eighth-grade AVID elective students scored 12.6 percentage points higher on the Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessment (QSMA) in pre-Algebra than their non-AVID elective peers. In comparing the data between the two groups, my research indicated that AVID elective students will succeed in honors courses.

Prior to the implementation of AVID, the students in between the honors students and the bottom 25% were placed in classes based on what was academically the norm for their grade. Other than looking at state standardized testing for reading placement, very little thought or suggestion was made to place these students in advanced classes. Typically, these students would not qualify for advanced classes based on their state standardized test scores due to not scoring high enough on assessments to be considered highly proficient. However, with support from the AVID elective, these students demonstrated the ability to achieve well in honors courses.

Economic Analysis

There is a huge economic value to providing AVID in all secondary schools. For one, students in AVID begin to prepare in middle school (grades 6-8) for their next step after high school. This allows the student to consider courses offered at the high school to assist them in meeting their goals post-graduation. If the student chooses a post-secondary school, the student

will be better prepared for success at that level, graduating on time, and then entering the workforce. If a student decides to go the employment route, they can take certification courses while in high school to prepare them for immediate entrance into the workforce. AVID students will, therefore, become solid employees in the workforce and give back to the community that supported them. If the student chooses the military, they will have prepared for advancement through honors-level course work and will have learned how to be an active part of a team and an advocate for themselves. Schools will be producing young adults who upon graduating will be productive citizens in the community.

The community spends valuable resources, time, and finances on the education of its youth between kindergarten and their senior year of high school. Although many communities may not provide a post-secondary institution within their borders, they provide for the education of their youth at the primary and secondary levels. Once a student has graduated, the community benefits from their input costs by having the students return to the community and be part of the workforce and become productive citizens of that community.

Social Analysis

AVID creates a community within the school. Students move through classes together and are in the AVID elective together. Through the courses, students learn how to communicate with each other and complete assignments. A large portion of AVID is the tutoring component, where students learn to assist each other or a volunteer assists students in a unique way. As students and volunteers work together to assist each other, the process of teaching one another is at the forefront. Students and volunteers do not give an answer, but the small group, usually no more than four students, assists other students in understanding the process in which the answer can be determined. This way the student now understands how to use critical thinking skills to

solve problems. The workplace requires employees to work as a team and the AVID students completely understand the concept and are trained to not only work as a team, but to assist each other and use critical thinking skills to solve problems that may arise in school, on the job, or in a social situation. The AVID elective student is trained to be social in the work setting and able to adapt easily to social cues and changes.

Parents are also brought into the AVID community, and they are supported in the process of their child's education moving forward. The stigma of "I didn't go to college, and I am doing fine" slowly disappears. Parents are counseled and supported in understanding how they can assist their child in post-secondary education as they are taught about opportunities for federal assistance, scholarships, and other grant possibilities. The parents understand that supporting their children is important and that even small accomplishments should be rewarded. Both the parent and the student work together along with the school in order for all to be successful. The parent becomes more confident in their ability to help their child and in turn, can feel more successful in their abilities to help others. The extension of this would be that the parent would want to become a more active participant in the community.

Political Analysis

Politics play a role within a school district. Even if the superintendent is appointed by the school board, the school board is an elected body. Therefore, the school board may make decisions based on what is best for their votes and not always what is best for students. Knowing this, AVID can be a very strong source of voter approval. Since the district under study has been approached by community members to assist in providing highly trained future employees, the district must work to gather support from the community. Many of the schools in the district under study are Title I schools, and there is a need to assist parents and students to be successful.

An essential part of AVID is parent involvement. Once parents see and acknowledge how AVID is assisting them and their children, their voices can be heard by the people representing them on the school board.

School leaders include school board members in parent night events and other promotional events, and this allows board members to participate with their community on a increased level and allows the voters a unique perspective on board members, which in turn is noticed on voting day. School and district leaders bring in the press to observe and cover stories about what is happening in AVID and inviting elected board members provides further political support for AVID and the elected officials.

Social media is also useful to gain political influence. Allowing elected officials to be included in open accounts and posts keeps them in touch with what is going on at school and allows them to interject comments and interact with the community. Posting pictures of elected persons interacting with the students and in other community events related to AVID further establishes that AVID is indeed worth supporting.

Legal Analysis

For every policy that is written, there are often legalities to consider. For my policy, one consideration is financial support. The school district's financial department is actively engaged to ensure that funding that is directed toward supporting AVID is allocated correctly and within the rules of the Department of Education. Some monies are categorical, allocated for certain expenditures, and cannot be used to fund other areas. For example, if there are leftover funds for furniture purchasing, the funds cannot be used for sending teachers to an AVID training. However, funding for initiatives that will no longer be implemented can be moved to other funding sources. For example, if there is funding for teacher in-service for a reading camp, and

that program is no longer being offered, funds can be transferred to other in-service trainings such as AVID training.

Another area of legal concern is how to handle the community and volunteers coming into the school to assist students in AVID. Volunteers are permitted to come to school and tutor the students fulfilling a requirement of the AVID elective course. Volunteers have to complete volunteer applications and have a background check. Although this is standard, it does not clear everyone. For the most part, such volunteers are often high school students needing to earn community service hours for scholarships and college entrance, college students wanting experience in teaching, or older community members looking to help students in their community. A concern is appropriate behavior among all volunteers. My policy requires school and district leaders to follow appropriate guidelines on how to react appropriately if a volunteer violates expected behaviors. Despite the possibility of legal ramifications, the benefits of the AVID system far outweigh any possible legal issue, and AVID should be part of every secondary school.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

Educators have a moral and ethical obligation to do what is best for all students. The state of the district under study placed requirements on subgroups of students (bottom 25%, minorities, students in the exceptional student education program, English learners of other languages) for growth, as well as the percent that has to be tested within each of the subgroups. For these subgroups of students, there are meetings and discussions among educators to determine how to help them achieve. The honor students are successful as they are typically driven to do well. Many schools offer honors classes, advanced placement courses, and other programs in which students can thrive and be successful. However, in my experience as an

educator, I have noted that many education systems do not offer much variety to the average “C” students, with adequate assessments, who attend school regularly, do the work, and go home. In my professional opinion, these students deserve more than just an average adequate education. They do not attract much attention, so they do not receive much more than adequate. Ethically, educators need to strive to do better for these students. Moving them to an honors course can be very scary for them as they have often heard they are not “honor” material. They may not have the support of family members and parent(s) may be working several jobs and do not have time to convey how important education is for their future. AVID fills in the gap for such students.

Morally, educators owe more to their profession as well. Learning and developing young minds, while fulfilling their own career goals is gratifying for many educators. AVID teaches teachers how to utilize and incorporate sound, scientifically proven, teaching strategies into their curriculum without adding any more to an already overburdened workload. AVID encourages teachers to reflect and adjust lesson plans to incorporate more student-driven activities and learning. AVID encourages teachers to let go of some of the control and allow students to learn the way they learn best (student choice). Growth among educators occurs from pushing their students and themselves into an environment of safety where failure is accepted as part of the learning process.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

With the policy that each secondary school will become an AVID school, community relationships will build with AVID schools. Elementary schools seem to be able to attract many people to volunteer their help. Parents are often involved, and the surrounding community supports the elementary school in various ways. However, as students grow and move into secondary schools the level of parental involvement and community support seems to drop.

Students become involved in various activities which pull parents and community resources in different directions. Students are involved in sports, clubs, and other activities that pull parent participation in many directions. However, with AVID, parents and the community play a vital role in the school. Parents are invited to come to the schools to further develop their own knowledge and to help their child in the same manner. In my policy, I include district personnel to assist schools. One way to do so is to have district personnel assist with developing AVID Resource Centers at each school. These can be staffed during various times of the day to provide assistance to parents in completing financial applications, seeking guidance, and having access to community resources. The resource center must be open at various times and days to accommodate parents who have work hours other than the typical 9-to-5 workday.

The community becomes involved in AVID schools to help ensure the success of the students. The community can share experiences with the students, assist them with career planning and preparation, provide political and financial support, and keep the school leaders informed about what the community needs of the students. Community members play a pivotal role in the success of AVID within the school.

Staff members benefit in many ways. Students learn from research-based teaching strategies in a safe and secure environment. As students take more responsibility for their own learning, teachers are free to trust in the process and assist students who may need more support. As my research showed, teachers are more satisfied with their careers and the success they see with their students. Teachers become mentors for other teachers helped them learn and activate the effective strategies. Teachers begin to form a community among themselves, and unexpected leaders start to emerge.

Conclusion

The policy to implement AVID in all secondary schools eliminates the gap between the average student and success in choices made after high school. It also improves teacher satisfaction in their career field. School and district leaders, teachers, parents, students, and the community reap the benefits provided by AVID in many diverse and positive ways. In the long run, AVID provides socio-economic benefits to the community by providing active, productive citizens, providing growth and productivity with students, supporting parents with the needs of their children, and provides satisfaction in teachers' careers.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

I evaluated how the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) College and Career Readiness System affected students at a rural Title I school. I completed a study of middle schoolers in sixth through eighth grade in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. As I began conducting research, I noticed a difference in the attitude of some of the teachers. Teachers involved in AVID talked more positively about students and their jobs, they smiled more and were more excited to discuss teaching strategies that they were using in class than the teachers who were not part of AVID. This was such a difference in mood and the general attitude that I decided to research whether AVID affected teacher satisfaction. Reviewing my data, even on a small scale, leads district leaders to deduce that AVID impacts students so they perform at a higher level in ELA and math than their non-AVID peers, as well as improves teacher satisfaction. My change leadership plan is available to be considered by district leaders for implementation at all secondary schools in the district under study.

Discussion

The purpose of my study was to evaluate if implementing the AVID system improved scores in ELA and math in one rural Title I school, during the first year of initiating all three grade levels, sixth, seventh, and eighth. I also studied whether AVID affected teacher satisfaction at that school and at the high school into which the middle school fed. I wanted to evaluate if AVID would make an impact on those students who have average test scores, take average classes, and whose parents did not attain post-secondary education. I analyzed and compared data from the Quarterly Standards Mastery Assessment (QSMA) for the school year 2020-2021. This assessment was a standardized test developed by the district under study. These tests were predictors of how well students would perform on the state assessment as well as provided

teachers with valuable information in areas that students needed re-teaching. Please note that data for the state assessments during this year were unavailable as the assessments were canceled by the Department of Education and the governor of the state due to COVID-19 and the impact that it had on public education.

When evaluating eighth-grade scores using the QSMA for the first, second, and third quarters, the AVID elective students scored an average of 42.3% while the school average was 29.7%. The AVID elective students on average scored 12.6 percentage points higher than their non-AVID peers. However, in Algebra I, the AVID students scored an average of 33.7%, while the school average was 38.6%, which was 4.9 percentage points lower among the AVID students. When evaluating ELA data, the AVID students scored an average of 67.9% while the average score for the school was 52.9%. AVID students scored 15 percentage points higher than the school average. It should be noted that any score below 60% is not considered proficient.

When comparing the data for seventh graders in math, the AVID elective students scored an average of 29.3% with the school average of 35.7%. The AVID students in seventh grade scored 6.4 percentage points lower than their non-AVID peers. For ELA, the AVID students scored 61.7% while the school average was 46.6%. The AVID students scored 15.5 percentage points higher than their non-AVID peers in ELA. Although these aggregate scores are not considered proficient, the AVID students scored, on average, higher than their non-AVID peers.

Looking at the data of the sixth graders, only two nine-week periods were compared due to a technology glitch that would not allow the 3rd quarter scores to be added to the program for comparison. For math, the sixth-grade AVID students scored 45.8%, while the school average was 34.6%. The AVID elective students scored 11.2 points higher than their non-AVID peers. When evaluating ELA scores, the sixth-grade AVID students scored 54.6%, while the school

average was 50.0%. This is 4.6 points higher for the AVID elective students as compared to the non-AVID elective students. It should be noted that none of these aggregate scores are considered proficient.

I also evaluated discipline and attendance data to compare AVID elective students to the non-AVID elective students to identify whether the sense of “community” would make a difference in students getting referrals and to identify if the AVID elective student would come to school more often. I found that the 43 AVID students had 13 total referrals (an average of 2% of AVID students had referrals), while the 573 non-AVID students had 521 referrals (an average of 98% of non-AVID students had a referral). Attendance data showed that the 43 AVID elective students had 875 days absent (an average of 4.9% days missed by AVID students) while the 573 non-AVID elective students missed 17,237 days of school (an average of 3.3% days missed by non-AVID students). Since it was a COVID-19 year, I also evaluated the number of days missed due to quarantine and other COVID-19-related issues. My data showed that the AVID students missed 58 days (74% days missed due to COVID for the AVID students), while the non-AVID students missed 981 days (58% days missed due to COVID for non-AVID students).

I evaluated data from interviews and questionnaires to determine if AVID implementation would help with teacher job satisfaction. I first noticed a change in one particular teacher which sparked my interest in determining if it was AVID that made the change or if it was something else that was being done to create the mind shift. My data demonstrated that the teachers, although hesitant and overwhelmed at first, found that they were really enjoying AVID and the strategies they were using to educate their students. Even though there were some misconceptions about the AVID elective and who could be part of AVID, the teachers felt that having the students take ownership and responsibility for their own education made the effort of

learning AVID worth the time and energy. Teachers stated that the advantages of AVID were that teachers became more effective, and therefore, students became more successful. Students developed personal responsibility and their circumstances did not define them. The entire school developed a strong learning environment. When asked if you believe that AVID has helped you become a better teacher, the data showed that the teachers with more experience did not find it as rewarding as the less experienced teachers.

A few teachers stated that they were already using the strategies, were having a hard time seeing the value, and some felt more satisfaction because they had more input into the purpose than they had before teaching AVID. Others stated that they had more awareness of strategies to encourage collaboration, AVID kept them organized and on track, and AVID held them more accountable to provide rigorous instruction. When asked about their students, teachers replied that the students were more organized, students became self-motivated and advocated for themselves, students realized what they were doing was important for their future, and students were participating and wanting more rigor within the classroom as they now wanted to be challenged.

After finishing six months or more with AVID, I asked the teachers if they would continue in the AVID system. Then I asked why they would stay or why they would leave. Teacher 1 stated that they had always been supportive of the concepts of AVID before they knew about AVID and “Now there is a program to help teachers more, and therefore, help more students.” As another teacher pointed out, “AVID is just good teaching and should be used in the classroom whether you are part of AVID or not!” Another teacher stated, “There should be AVID in every school and that funding should be a priority.” Even though some teachers added that they did not see the importance of the AVID elective, other teachers felt that everyone

should be in AVID, and another felt that AVID needed to be initiated more faithfully and that this was the first program that had been taken seriously by the administration and faculty.

AVID is a resource for students, teachers, parents, and the community. My data showed that AVID and its principles and strategies assisted students in improve their test scores in ELA and math. The data also showed that attendance among AVID students improved and the referrals were reduced per average as compared to non-AVID peers. Interview and survey data also showed that teachers were more satisfied with their job performance than before they became involved in AVID, as AVID students became more responsible for their own learning and were willing to take risks.

Leadership Lessons

One of the leadership lessons that I learned while writing this dissertation is that politics are alive and well. I now understand that in order to make a change one needs people both in the school system and outside of the school system to “buy in” to what they want to change. It is best to have research to present and troubleshoot any areas with sound solutions so that everything is neat and orderly for presentation. The fewer unknowns the better when presenting new information. Also, getting people to assist with the presentation and the question-and-answer portion is a benefit. The lesson here is to not spring a new idea or system out of nowhere for the school board and the superintendent. They need to know in advance that an employee is conducting research to help solve a problem, but not necessarily making the decision or coercing the board into making a decision but rather offering a solution.

I learned that there is a need to support teachers when making changes. Changes can be scary at first when the process starts. Teachers need constant reassurance, support, and modeling. They need to be allowed to decompress and complain with no judgment. They need to then have

time to collaborate, work through problems, and be open to suggestions. Being part of the group to help guide, listen, and provide support both academically, emotionally, and financially, is important for building community and being seen as a leader that they can count on to be there for them.

I have grown as a leader in that I am much more prepared and more comfortable with presenting information and talking in front of my peers. When I first started this journey, talking to others or in front of others in the educational field was intimidating for me. I was very timid, shy, and unsure of myself. I often stuttered, talked quietly, and if I could crawl into the background, I would easily do that. Now, as I have had many opportunities to present information, not only to my class but to others through symposiums and other types of presentations, I am now more confident when presenting. In the past, I was never considered by others as a “real educator” due to the subject that I used to teach, Agriculture. This stigma was also confirmed by those not only in education but in the community as well. Even when moving from one school district to another, the stigma still stuck, and especially, as I started instructing students identified for Exceptional Student Education (ESE) in a self-contained setting. As I moved up through the system and changed my job titles, the notion that “I was not a real educator” just stuck with me. It was very hard to make the change as it had been with me for over 28 years. I am so thankful that I pushed myself to earn a degree that was very much out of my comfort zone. By working on this degree, I no longer feel that I am not a real educator. I keep reminding myself that for the majority of my career, I was a teacher, and I can relate to teachers. I might have been teaching Agriculture or middle school self-contained, but I taught! Many of the strategies I see teachers using today, I used, and still practice for other teachers. I am a teacher!

Conclusion

Overall, AVID helps students not only with increasing test scores, but also reduces time out of school, decreases referrals, and provides a sense of community within the grade levels. AVID provides a working relationship between teachers and students as students start to take ownership of their own education. AVID engages students in learning and teaches students to advocate for themselves. AVID provides a safe place for both students and educators to try new strategies for learning and growth. If done correctly and with fidelity, AVID can be a benefit to any learning community. For secondary schools, AVID is a great benefit to the students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community. Throughout this process, I have become more convinced and dedicated to assuring that AVID becomes a part of every secondary program.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Appendix C: As Is 4 Cs Chart

Appendix D: To Be 4 C's Chart

Appendix E: Strategies and Action Chart

Appendix A

Survey Questions

On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being strongly agree, please provide feedback as follows:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

Statement #1: I was not sure if I wanted to become part of the AVID System when I was approached.

Statement #2: I felt very lost and confused at the beginning of the year.

Statement #3: I believe that the AVID System is a benefit to my students.

Statement #4: I believe that the AVID System has helped me become a better teacher.

Statement #5: As a result of becoming an AVID teacher, I am more supportive of my students and peers.

Please provide written responses to questions 6 - 11.

6. What are the advantages of AVID?

7. What are the disadvantages of AVID?

8. Do you believe that becoming part of AVID has helped you become a better teacher? Why or why not?

9. Are you more satisfied with teaching after your first year of AVID? Why or why not?

10. What benefits, if any, have you seen in regard to your students in the AVID System?

11. Will you continue in the AVID System? Why or why not? If you have to because it is implemented in your school, please address this issue, but also explain your personal or professional reasons.

12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix B

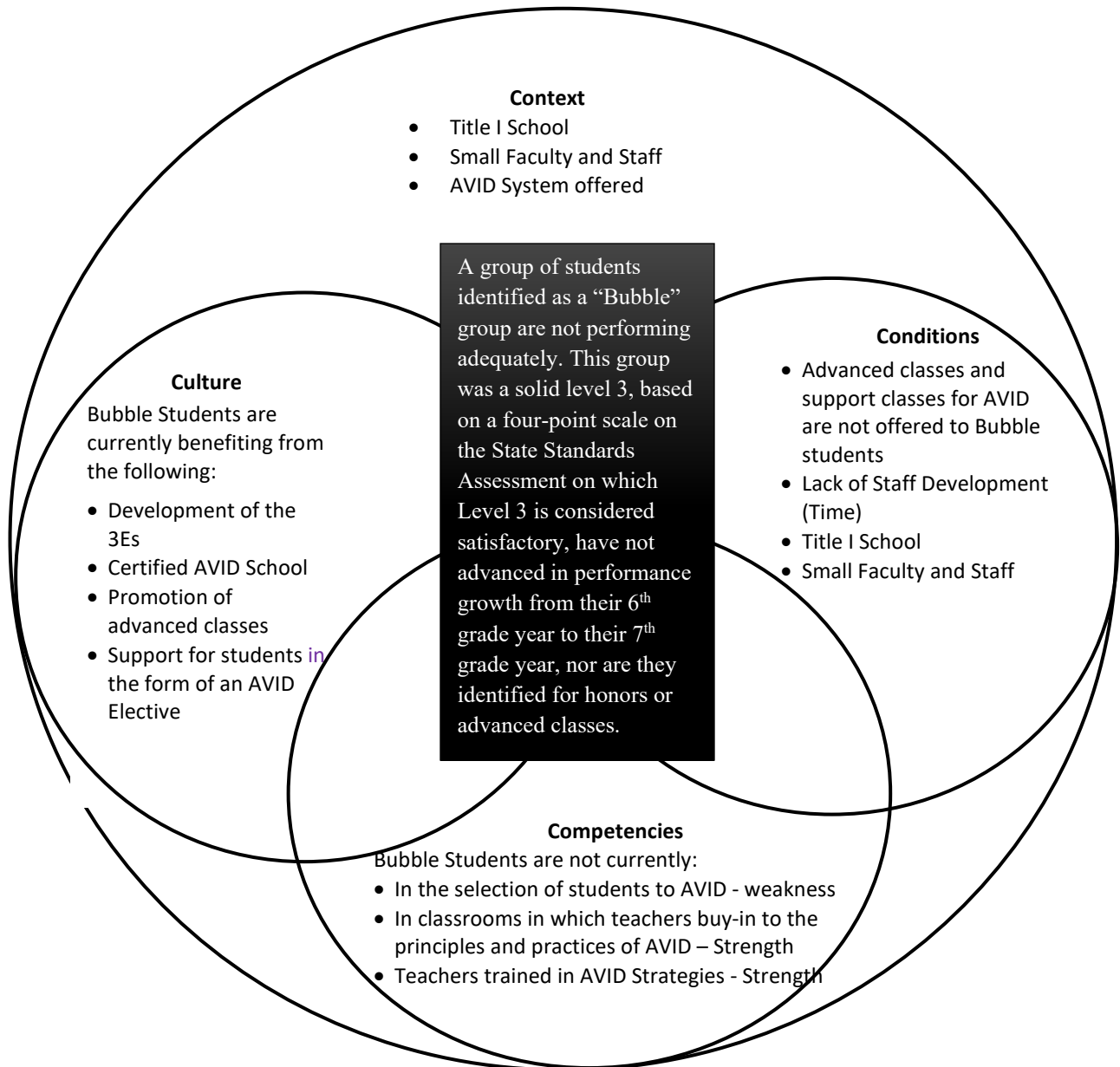
Teacher Interview Questions

1. Do you believe that becoming part of AVID has helped you become a better teacher?
2. Are you satisfied with teaching after your first year of AVID? Why or why not?
3. What benefits, if any, have you seen in regard to your students in the AVID System?
4. Will you continue in the AVID System? Why or why not?
5. Do you have to continue in AVID because it is now implemented at your school? Please explain.
6. Please address this issue:

Would you recommend AVID for a teacher who is struggling, burned out, or having difficulty with student performance?

Appendix C

As-Is Chart



Appendix D

To-Be Chart



Appendix E
Strategies and Action Chart

Strategies	Actions
Clarity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state the purpose to all stakeholders. • Clearly state the benefits of AVID. • Clearly state the plan of implementation.
Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and measure success. • Identify clear objectives. • Develop a plan to make change and sustain change.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form a sense of belonging. • Establish commitment from all stakeholders. • Select an AVID Coordinator.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial support. • Technology support. • Human Resources.
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind Shift from teachers “spooning” learning to students taking ownership and responsibility for learning. • Professional Development for AVID Teaching Strategies. • Modeling for teachers to experience and “see” what the strategies look like. • Provide time and cohort planning to implement strategies.
Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop leaders on campus (Informal Leadership). • Formal Leaders (school and district) support AVID via transparency, interactions, and visibility.

Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with all stakeholders. • Set meeting dates and times for discussion with stakeholders and stick to it. • Follow up with notes of meetings to stakeholders. • Continue to share data during the process (samples, attendance, grades, discipline, and test scores).
Making Meetings Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep on track to the purpose of the meeting.
Make Meetings Work (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep focus on the purpose of the meeting. • Do not waste the time of the stakeholders.
Making Change Peer by Peer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of social media (Twitter, Facebook, school/district website, texts).
FAQ's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the focus on the change. • Flexibility for issues that arise that were not planned for. • Continual monitoring.