



# Program Helps Students Dream Bigger

How do you convince students to believe in themselves? To reach for something more? That's what a program called AVID aims to do.

Last fall, the district introduced AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) into all three Central Kitsap high schools. More than 80 students, mostly freshmen, are participating this year.

About 5,600 schools globally have adopted AVID. It's been attractive to schools that want to level the playing field for students, regardless of their social, economic or racial backgrounds. AVID targets students in the "middle," who have average grades but need more skills to prepare for college. Its students are often the first in their families to attend college. Olympic High School Assistant Principal Alexys Haun describes the program this way: "AVID helps students dream bigger."

## Dreaming Bigger

The program centers around an elective class. Teachers nominate students who meet AVID criteria. "We're looking for students who are willing to work hard," said Craig Johnson, assistant principal at Central Kitsap High. "There's a lot of work outside the classroom."

Students sign contracts pledging to take at least one high-level course, such as an Advanced Placement class, to finish all their homework and more. Through AVID strategies, teachers help students build foundations for succeeding in all classes. Students learn to take effective notes, ask good questions, and work with a group.

In being chosen for the program, the message to students is: We believe in you. Now you have to believe in yourself and work hard to live up to those beliefs.

## In Class

Twice a week, AVID students break into small tutorial groups during class. They write out questions on white boards and ask their peers to help solve them. Trained tutors also offer guidance.



Central Kitsap High's AVID students help a classmate work through a problem.

On a recent Wednesday, Olympic High sophomore Amaya wrote out a math equation. Her classmates pepper her with questions, without just giving her the answer. The intent is to force her to look again, dig deeper and see that it was a simple mistake. "Did you see what you did?" one classmate asks. "Yeah, thanks guys," Amaya replies.

Throughout the class, their teacher checks their work. On other days, their teacher will review their notes from other classes, check their binders or check their grades. "This class makes you organized," said Jessafai, another Olympic sophomore. She said the class has helped. Even when she's having a hard time in a class, "If I really try, I can get through it."

## Looking Ahead

"There's been amazing growth," said Klahowya Secondary AVID teacher Jeff Witte. Previously timid students are presenting to crowds or jumping in to group discussions. "I want to see kids continue through the program and see

that they can be successful," Witte said. And after they graduate, "I want them to bring back success stories."

More than 90 percent of AVID seniors nationwide complete 4-year college entrance requirements. That's about double the national average, according to AVID. The district plans to expand the program by adding a class each year for incoming freshmen. But AVID's impact is expected to go beyond its elective classes. Each schools' AVID leaders share strategies with other teachers. "The ultimate goal is to be a tsunami through the school," said Klahowya's AVID coordinator Geoff Backlund. "We want it embedded in everything we do."

Why? Student Amaya may have said it best: "It opens your mind more. It makes you want to try in school and do better in school—not just graduate, but do your best."



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## Thanks to your support—

We're making fast progress on major improvements to our schools!



### Klahowya Secondary

Construction crews broke ground on an addition that adds permanent classrooms, an auxiliary gym and a second music room. Athletic field improvements, including synthetic turf installation, begin this summer.

### Olympic High

Construction fences are up as early site work begins. This summer, the center of the building will be demolished to make way for a two-story building that adds permanent classrooms, and includes a new library, theater, commons and counseling and career center.

### All Schools

Design work has begun on plans to remodel entryways and install security systems.

### Central Kitsap High & Middle

Designs are 50 percent complete. Demolition begins this summer on select buildings at the edge of the campus, such as the science kit center.

### Operations Service Center

Walls are going up on a new building that will consolidate our transportation, food services and warehouse departments. Those departments move this summer to make way for construction on the CK campus.



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Schools have changed a lot over the past several years. The way teachers teach, the way students learn, even the way desks are arranged. In our district, these changes have been purposeful. And they've been focused on one goal: we want students to be engaged and to take ownership of their learning.

As superintendent, the best part of my job is visiting classrooms. This year I've seen kindergarten students become engineers. I've seen middle school students become scientists. I've seen students in charge of their own education. They are asking questions. They are engaged. They are learning.

Our new AVID program is helping with this effort. The program is built on the belief that when you hold students to the highest standards—and provide academic and social support to reach those standards—they will rise to the challenge. AVID is laying the groundwork for some amazing student success stories. We can't wait to share them!

Why is it so important to us that our students take ownership of their learning? Because when students own their learning . . . they own their futures.

# Skills to Succeed

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AVID PROGRAM  
 BUILDS COLLEGE-READINESS SKILLS

Effective note-taking



Writing clearly



Reading to learn

Organization



Critical thinking



Asking good questions



Collaborating

This is the first school year that Central Kitsap schools have partnered with AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination). The program's goal is to help students learn better organizational and study strategies and critical-thinking skills to prepare them for college.

## Helping students reach their potential



future readiness, high expectations

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