



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **AVID African American Male Initiative Announces Pilot Schools**

SAN DIEGO - AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination), a college preparatory system serving largely first generation college-going students in nearly 4,500 schools in 45 states and 16 countries/territories, has today announced the Culturally Relevant Site Team (CREST) schools for its African American Male Initiative (AAMI).

Founded in 1980 in San Diego, AVID accelerates students who fall in the academic middle and creates a school-wide system of college readiness. AVID works to increase college entrance numbers by improving the education system for students who are often least represented in postsecondary institutions. Through rigorous curriculum and intensive support, AVID makes it possible for everyone to go to college.

The San Diego-based AVID Center is the national headquarters for AVID, and provides school districts with the curriculum, methodologies, and training to prepare their students for college eligibility and success. AVID Center has developed a number of initiatives to increase the college-going rates for this nation's students. Among those

initiatives, AAMI was developed to address raising achievement and other issues that affect the academic success of African American male students in this country.

"AVID is about holding all students to high expectations and providing support for them to succeed in rigorous courses. African American males continue to be under represented in rigorous courses and in higher education," said AVID Executive Director Jim Nelson. "AVID is committed to increasing the college-going, and college-success rates for these students. As a key part of our equity effort, we will continue to refine our program to reach out to more African American male students as well as teachers whom they can look up to as role models."

Six sites and school districts throughout the U.S. were selected to implement research-based best practices, including culturally responsive teaching, recruiting and retaining African American male students in AVID and rigorous curriculum. The schools met during the Atlanta Summer Institute as site teams, developed implementation plans, and will continue their work this year. To say that they valued the sessions would be an understatement. The AAMI pilot schools include: Acorn High School in New York, NY; Antelope Valley High School in Los Angeles, CA; Bowie High School in Arlington, TX; Mojave High School in Las Vegas, NV; Washington Union High School in Fresno, CA; and Woodlawn High School in Baltimore, MD. The goal of this initiative will raise high school graduation and college entrance rates for African American males. Researchers from the University of Texas, Pan American are studying this initiative.

AAMI has provided researched-based literature, studies, theories, practice, methodologies and data to our divisions and our clients. We disseminated these through

our journal ACCESS, which is published three times a year. We provided interviews with key leaders and researchers, including Pedro Noguera, Donna Ford, and Dr. Joe Hairston, and devoted entire issues to the raising achievement of African American males.

“AVID’s mission is to ensure all students are college-ready when they graduate high school,” said Maria Cobb, AVID’s National Director of Divisional Support who is heading up the AAMI initiative. “We are excited to have these schools join the pilot and eager to share their results in getting more African American males into AVID and on the path to college readiness.”

Two AAMI equity conferences called Up Where We Belong were held in Atlanta, GA in the fall of 2007 and 2008. School districts were presented with first-hand information, research and best practices about the problem and the solutions to raising achievement for African American males and school districts began to form their own plans for equity district goals, steering committees, and staff training. Presenters included Donna Ford, Calvin Mackie, and Jawanza Kunjufu, among many others.

The AAMI pilot schools will establish explicit equity goals and a multi-year plan and exemplify culturally responsive teaching. AVID Center will work with the schools to further support the increased enrollment of African American males in the AVID program and recruitment of African American teachers and AVID tutors. The pilot schools will serve as an exemplary model site for other schools looking to increase the achievement of their African American male students.

For more information on AVID's equity initiative, including AAMI, visit

[www.avidcenter.org/equity](http://www.avidcenter.org/equity).

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Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, is a fourth grade through high school system to prepare students in the academic middle for four-year college eligibility, and is currently implemented in nearly 4,500 sites in 45 states, Washington, DC and 15 countries. Currently, AVID serves approximately 400,000 students. For more information, visit [www.avidonline.org](http://www.avidonline.org).