



MEDIA RELEASE

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San Antonio area students participate in *JUNTOS* conference to help educators Conference united educators in finding solutions to challenges facing Latino students

A panel of current and former AVID students from the San Antonio area, ranging from fourth grade to college, captivated the audience during the lunch session of AVID's *JUNTOS* conference. AVID's *JUNTOS* conference united educators to focus on providing solutions to the challenges facing Latino students, the fastest growing population in the United States. When students were asked about their future plans, Natalia, a confident Roosevelt Elementary fifth grader stated, "I am going to Harvard Law School." "And if that doesn't work out?" asked moderator Granger Ward. "I'll keep trying; I know I will because of AVID," Natalia proclaimed with a big smile, assuring the crowd of educators that one day she would certainly be enrolled in Harvard Law School.

North East ISD's Lee High School senior Francisca Rodriguez, ranked in the top 15 percent of her class, told the group that she would be the first in her family to attend college, "With AVID, you're ahead of the game and headed in the right direction. Both of my parents came to the U.S. from Mexico with only a partial education. They struggled and worked hard to give my sister and me a good life. AVID has helped me learn the skills I will need in college."

"I knew AVID would keep me on track for college and help me focus on the things I need to do my senior year that I wasn't sure I would be able to do on my own," stated senior Michael Salazar, a National Honor Society member and baseball player at MacArthur High School, also in North East ISD.

Telling his story prior to the panel discussion, Ediberto Diaz, currently a sophomore at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas majoring in Business and French said that he was told, "College is for rich people. Learn English and get a decent job." "I didn't listen to them," said Diaz. "My AVID teachers said I could do more, and the support I received from AVID has been the basis for my success."

All of the student speakers affirmed what the educators in the room knew, AVID works. The 30-year-old college prep program has proven year after year, that students who are often pegged as having little to no chance of attending college can succeed in courses with rigorous curriculum and attend colleges or universities of their choice.

Conference attendees were also informed and inspired by Russlynn Ali, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education and critically acclaimed and bestselling author Victor Villaseñor (*Macho*, *Burro Genius*, *Rain of Gold* and many other works).

AVID is a college-prep system that began in San Diego in 1980 and is now used in more than 4,500 schools in 45 states and 16 countries/territories. AVID's proven methodologies, strategies and school wide implementation empowers students with the support they need to succeed in the most challenging classes.

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