

1. Briefly describe your site's AVID program, its history, and its evolution toward closing the achievement gap and promoting college readiness, equity or rigor.

National City, CA Granger Junior High School (GJHS) is in National City California, one of the poorest cities in San Diego County. The median household income is \$15,000. There is a high crime rate and a large immigrant population. The student population is made up of minority and underrepresented students. 90 % of our students receive free and reduced lunch and approximately 30 % are English Learners. It was easy for our staff and community to see this data, and use it as an excuse for failure. Our school was dominated by a gang presence, and we suffered from the worst reputation in the district. In 2003 our API score was 607, and we were in our third year of Program Improvement. In 2004 the journey toward rigor and equity truly began. Our Principal was a strong supporter of the AVID philosophy. She believed every student could learn if we created a school culture that promoted learning and achievement. She began by expanding the AVID program and adding sections of AVID, from 2 classes to 7. She invited and paid for teachers from every department to attend the AVID summer institute, which was the beginning of our AVID site team. We expanded the Cornell note taking method school wide by training all students. We also taught parents how to take Cornell notes at parent meetings. The next step was the most challenging. As a staff we adopted a new mission statement that closely reflected the mission of AVID. Our mission states that, "We will ensure that all students will realize their boundless potential through a system of learning distinguished by... enrichment and rigor... and timely support and intervention..." To fulfill our mission, we expanded the AVID philosophies of equity and rigor with support to the entire campus. We eliminated what we called academies, where students received fifth grade English and Math curriculum with no opportunity to take Science and Social Science, and placed all students in core courses—grade level English, Math, Science, and Social Science. All 8th grade students were placed in Algebra and all 9th grade students were placed in Biology. All students were then supported during the school day either through AVID or support classes. Far below basic students were given a third support class during 7th period. To further support our push towards rigor and equity, we created a mandatory Intervention program after-school. Any student who did not turn in their homework stayed after school the same day to complete their homework, and they were assisted by college tutors. Any student who got below 70% on their weekly quiz stayed after school for re-teaching and an opportunity to retake the quiz. All of these changes paid off. After six years we have improved our API score to 782, an overall increase of 175 points. This year we were selected as a "California Schools To Watch—Taking Center Stage" model school, one of 27 in California and one of 250 in the nation.

2. Describe your achievement data:

All students at GJHS are treated like AVID students. We believe that if they are given the proper support, they will succeed. In the past we did not offer an algebra class for 7th grade students. We now place advanced students in Algebra in the 7th grade, and in 2009 almost all, 96%, were proficient. The rest of our students, including English Learners (ELs), take Algebra in the 8th grade. Our gains in math have been significant. In 2005 with only proficient students taking algebra only 30% were proficient. In 2009 with FBB, BB and B students taking Algebra 56% were proficient. Even our ELs went from single digits proficient in Algebra to 38% in 2009. By placing all students in rigorous core classes and providing them support, most students are on track to complete their A-G requirements, and our high school has had to open new sections of higher level Math courses to accommodate our students.

3. Describe your site's demographics and how AVID has accelerated efforts to promote equity and rigor.

GJHS's demographics: 73% Hispanic, 18% Filipino, 3% African American, 3% White and 3% Other. 90% of our students receive free and reduced lunch, and as a result, we qualify for universal feeding for next year. For many schools throughout the nation, these types of statistics are a perfect excuse for failure. We have taken the AVID philosophy of rigor and support for underrepresented students and applied it to our entire school. Every student at our school is underrepresented. Besides adding 7 sections of AVID we have taken the AVID model and expanded it to all of our classrooms. In AVID, college tutors guide students in collaborating and learning twice a week. School wide, every student has access to college tutors after school to complete and excel in their rigorous school work. In AVID all students are required to take Cornell notes. School wide all students are trained in the Cornell note taking method and teachers have adopted note taking and summary as a school wide strategy. In AVID students are taught that two heads are better than one. They are taught to ask high level questions and to collaborate with and teach each other. School wide, all desks are arranged in pairs or groups and teachers structure time throughout the lesson for students to turn to each other and discuss what they are learning. In sum, the proven strategies that have worked in AVID, are working for GJHS school wide. As a result, we have been able to maintain our rigorous course sequence for all students regardless of language fluency, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity.

4. Describe how your site's AVID program contributed to building the site's leadership capacity and providing strategic staff development for promoting equity and rigor.

AVID expanded its leadership first through inviting and paying for teachers from different departments to go to the AVID Summer Institute. We started off slowly with these teachers using AVID strategies such as Cornell notes, academic discourse with higher level thinking questions and students collaborating and teaching each other. The AVID teachers and coordinator assisted by providing training in Cornell note taking to other staff members and all students. The After School Program staff assisted in providing tutoring to support students in dealing with their new

rigorous curriculum. The administration helped by providing all teachers the training and expectation that best practices were to be implemented school wide. The counseling staff helped by creating a master schedule where every student is provided with rigorous core classes. Staff has received training in how weave collaboration and high level academic discourse in every lesson. In all classrooms the seats are arranged in pairs or groups so students can turn to their partners discuss a topic, write about it, and then share out. Since this training was given and teachers have begun to implement it, the quality of AVID tutorials has increased dramatically. Before the school wide effort, AVID tutorials were good, but not great. Now that students have the same expectation in every class, to collaborate, talk about their learning and teach each other, AVID tutorials have improved tenfold.

5. Describe the systems, structures, and processes your site has put in place that address equity in your most rigorous courses so all students have the opportunity to become four year college eligible.

How does your school define rigor and how is it demonstrated?

Granger defines rigor as helping students develop the capacity to understand complex, challenging content. Rigor is present in a course of study when students collaborate and ask higher level questions of each other to further each one's understanding of key concepts. Thus, we adopted the motto, "No Hay Pobrecitos en Granger." This means socioeconomic status and ethnic background is not an excuse for failure. All students, whether they are poor or from a minority group, are expected to take core classes and meet the state standards at their grade level or above. All students are expected to develop their academic vocabulary and engage in written and oral discourse that promotes student collaboration. They are expected to ask higher level questions of each other as they are collaborating to deepen their knowledge. In every classroom, word walls and sentence starters are displayed to prompt students to use academic language and encourage discourse. Seats are deliberately arranged to encourage collaboration.

What systemic approaches are in place that open access for all students to participate in advanced course work that yield greater college entrance?

Students CST scores and grades are reviewed to make sure every student is challenged. Proficient or advanced students for example, are automatically enrolled in Algebra and Honors courses in the 7th grade, on track to take Geometry in the 8th and Intermediate Algebra in the 9th. Basic AVID students are also put on this same track. FBB and BB students are also given rigorous courses such as Algebra in the 8th grade. They, however, are automatically given an Algebra support class during the school day and an additional 7th period class. Our mandatory, targeted Intervention program after school further supports our students enrolled in these rigorous courses.

What has your site done to eliminate the barriers to students' entry into rigorous courses?

All barriers and excuses for failure have been eliminated. Students are simply placed in rigorous and college prep classes, and if they experience difficulty they are provided with immediate and effective support and intervention.

What school-wide supports for both teachers and students are in place to ensure that students are meeting the demands of high rigor, high skill course work?

We support teachers and students systematically to meet the demands of the required rigor. Teachers are provided time to meet with their professional learning communities (PLC) to develop common lessons and common weekly quizzes that cover the state standards. Each day a student takes a quiz in a different core class. Each department has a reserved day of the week for their quizzes, and one day after school for re-teaching. If a student does not pass the quiz with 70% or more, they are immediately referred to the after school program that picks

them up after school to receive re-teaching in the standards they missed on the quiz. Students then have a chance to re take the quiz. With this type of formative assessment, students do not get more than one week behind. GJHS also provided Saturday workshops to catch up, intersession classes and site specific summer school. School routines focus on research-based instructional strategies that promote achievement for English learners. Teachers participate in staff development provided by both the district and school to refine practice. In addition, teachers also work with instructional coaches to ensure effective implementation of these strategies. In every classroom, word walls and sentence starters are displayed to prompt students to use academic language and encourage discourse. Seats are deliberately arranged to encourage collaboration.

Describe how your site has increased participation and success in rigorous coursework for diverse groups

Our significant sub groups are increasing their scores enough, so that we are on track to close the achievement gap. Comparing AYP scores from 2004 to 2009 our subgroups have made the following advances: Hispanic; from 22% to 41%, Economically disadvantaged; from 24% to 43% proficient. English Learners; from 17% to 30% proficient, Filipino; from 48% to 69% proficient.

What evidence do you have that shows these groups have entered and succeeded in colleges and universities?

Our students go to Sweetwater High School in the 10th grade. Since the changes we have made our students and parents are demanding and expecting the same level of rigor. We are sending students to the high school on track to complete their A-G requirements. The majority of our 10th graders who took the CAHSEE at the high school passed it the first time: 251 took the math test and 214 or 85% passed the first time. 138 or 55% passed with a score of 380 or above. 250

took the English test and 201 or 83% passed the first time. 141 or 56% scored 380 or above. All AVID students passed the CAHSEE with 380 or more.

What professional development was instrumental in changing your site to a culture of inclusion that embraces open access and support for students in rigorous courses?

Our strategic planning session in which our mission was created was instrumental in changing our expectations for our students. We decided that if all our students will fulfill their full potential then we need to ensure that all of them are placed in rigorous courses. In addition, our district established a partnership with San Diego State University, called the Compact for Success. This district wide program encourages all students to meet the requirements of completing their A-G requirements with a minimum grade point average. This program is promoted to all students and parents and field trips to the university are arranged yearly. Counselors provide many opportunities, such as “College, Making it Happen!” night and meetings for parents and students to write their 4 year plan. At GJHS we make it our mission to make sure every student is on track to complete the requirements to go to a 4 year university. Our next goal is to no longer need social promotion. Every student will be supported to the extent that they will all promote to the next grade level.