

Orlando, FL In 2004, the AVID elective course became a catalyst for change at Stonewall Jackson Middle School. Supported by a small site team, it was decided to implement AVID with five sections, serving over 100 seventh and eighth grade students. Now six years later, AVID has grown to nearly 200 students in ten AVID elective classes, and has permeated the culture of the entire school.

As AVID expanded, the site team and administrative support grew, as well. The second year of AVID all site team teachers attended Summer Institute. The program experienced great success in student achievement, parental involvement and the increase in amount of advanced/honors courses available. We believe the focus on open access to rigorous math classes throughout the three grade levels in AVID has cultivated a new crop of high achieving students at Jackson. 2004-2005 was the first year of AVID implementation at Jackson Middle School; there were 1-2 algebra honors courses available, mainly to the highest level students in the school. After a few years of AVID, the number of sections of algebra more than tripled. AVID served as a gateway to expand the level of rigor and opportunity for academic success at SJMS. Two years ago, Stonewall Jackson offered only 2 sections of high school credit-bearing science exclusively to our 8th grade IB students. We now have 8 sections of high school honorsth Earth Space Science in which our students are continuing to excel. Presently, over 90% of the 8th grade AVID class is enrolled in HSth Honors Earth Space Science in addition to taking algebra or algebra honors classes. If last year's 8th grade data is indicative of the growing success for our students, we can expect to surpass the 86% mark of AVID students who passedth honors high school science with a C or higher again this year. Next year, two of our present 7th grade AVID students will be eligible to take geometry in the 8th grade. Our site team, together with ourth administration, is looking to offer a high school credit-bearing foreign language class for our 8th grade students next year, as well.

Stonewall Jackson Middle School is a high poverty, high Hispanic population school with 85% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. A large majority of our students will be the first in their families to achieve a college education. Moreover, a significant number of our present AVID students were English Language Learners in their elementary and middle school years. This has not prevented them from enjoying success in rigorousth classes. 100% of our AVID students are enrolled in advanced math with over 85% of the 8th grade AVID students achieving a grade of C or higher so far this school year. As the success of our present AVID students grows, so has the expansion of rigorous classes offered to our non-AVID ESOL population by adjusting the master schedule to open class sections of high-level rigorous classes on all teams.

Describe the systems, structures and processes your site has put in place that address equity in your most rigorous course so that all students (especially the AVID students) have the opportunity, encouragement and support to become four year college eligible and college ready.

What has your site done to eliminate the barriers to students' entry into rigorous courses at the middle level? Though our school is organized by teams (IB/AVID/ESOL...) we have begun cross-teaming more of our AVID and ESOL students, particularly in 8th grade. One example of this cross-teaming is our IB science teacher's high school credit-bearing science class. Mr. Ho a Yun has invited students from all teams to participate in his classes. He is adamant that his IBth students learn as much from the other students as they learn from their IB peers. Ten of the 8th grade AVID students are taking honors algebra in the IB honors algebra classes. Furthermore, several of our 8th grade AVID students were cross-teamed for advanced language arts into IB language arts. This trend to cross-team will move into 7th grade next year for any math and language arts students who are ready for the rigor. As we continue to work towards college readiness for all students, we continually ask ourselves, "What is rigor?"

To ensure we meet the ever-changing needs of our students, Stonewall Jackson Middle School places high value on professional development which occurs on a weekly basis. There is a great emphasis placed on educational leadership and teacher-led professional development. Several staff development sessions have featured teachers sharing AVID strategies. In fact, our next staff development will be an "internal site visit" in which teachers will tour classrooms on their planning period, similar to what guests experience on a site visit. The goal is to allow our teachers to see the school as outsiders see us and to emulate the best practices in action.

What systemic approaches are in place that opens access for all students to participate in advanced coursework? What evidence do you have to show these groups are successful? Our data continues to change as do our approaches to helping students succeed. Our students are individuals, and they each come with different needs, talents and knowledge gaps. We continue to reach out to students who would not typically be viewed as advanced-course candidates and certainly not algebra candidates. We have to adjust every year to make the students achieve at the level that will truly prepare them for high school rigor and Advanced Placement® courses. This requires a level and form of rigorous coursework that they must be able to reach without watering down instruction or content along the way.

All AVID students in grades 6, 7 and 8 are required to take advanced math / algebra in 8th grade. To ensure that the students are capable of taking this rigorous math course, we've put several support systems in place, including math tutoring before school and math summer camp. We have a tremendously dedicated math coach who worked with the AVID coordinator and the AVID elective teachers during the summer to select our AVID students. We dislike turning students away from AVID, so instead, we created extra math instruction into the schedules for our 7th and 8th grade students who would otherwise not qualify to take the advanced math classes. Thus, the selection process allows us to look at each student individually. All students applying for AVID take a math diagnostic test. We review test results, as well as their course grade, FCAT score, interviews and teacher recommendation. As a team, we look at each student and determine if they have the scores in get into AVID. Students who have low scores but are motivated are identified to attend Math Camp. The extensive application process extends the opportunity for more students to take the AVID elective and offers support structures to ensure they will be successful in algebra by the time they reach 8th grade.

Moreover, students who receive a D or F on any report card are recommended for tutoring. This year the tutoring forms were attached to all report cards that receive a D or F. This helps to keep them in AVID.

Currently in research period, 8th graders work with teachers who alternately give extra instruction in both reading and math. The teacher works closely with Mr. Barnett, the algebra teacher, so that they can reinforce the concepts and hone the basics.

To further ensure all concepts are mastered, our math coach has developed and distributed math strategy lesson plans to be conducted school-wide. The computer lab has been opened to struggling math students to utilize Success Maker. Our AVID students are strongly encouraged to participate in free after-school tutoring opportunities and to write algebra questions for their bi-weekly AVID tutorials.

Thus, Stonewall Jackson Middle School continues to work diligently as a team each year to meet the needs of all students. As a National Demonstration School they have embraced the AVID Mission, “to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.”