

THE WESTERNER

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE AVID WESTERN DIVISION

A Word from the AVID Western Division Director...

Happy New Year from the Western Division Team!

We had a very full and productive fall season; nearly 1,200 educators participated in AVID training events from 558 secondary sites, and over 150 AVID school visits were conducted. Many thanks to all of our school districts, schools, and funders, including GEAR UP, College Spark, APIP, and Small Learning Communities, who provided the support to bring AVID to our 37,646 AVID students. With spring fast approaching, we will soon be gearing up for the excitement of Summer Institute training and the opportunity to spend time with our Western Division AVID school teams. Last summer, we had a record 3,685 educators who attended an Institute! Hopefully, we will enjoy a great turnout from our Division again this summer.

Thomas Huxley once said, "The rung of a ladder was never meant to rest upon, but only to hold a man's foot long enough to enable him to put the other somewhat higher." In AVID, we continue to believe in the power of our students to become something they never believed they could. Each day represents the next step in their becoming highly performing, academically successful, college-ready students. Our teachers are the heart of this effort to create a college-ready culture in our schools and to carry forward the mission and vision of all students prepared to enter the college of their choice. Our schools will only truly become places of excellence when they are excellent for all students; this can and will happen if AVID serves as a key foundational piece to a school's culture and the vision of academic success for all students. Our students are our hope for the future...it is they who motivate our work, who cause us to want to become better teachers, counselors, and administrators, and it is they who humble us as we look out across our own lives.

As we move into the second semester of this school year, I wish you a spring of great success in your work and many joyful moments with your students. As always, the Western Division team is available to assist you with your needs and inquiries; please do not hesitate to contact us at any time.



Respectfully,

Karen

Karen Lewis,
AVID Western Division Director

SAVE THE DATE! SUMMER INSTITUTE 2012 OPENING DOORS TO OPPORTUNITY

Dallas 1- June 20-22

Dallas 2 - June 25-27

Orlando - July 9-11

Sacramento - July 9-11

**Western Division
Hosted!**

Indianapolis - July 23-25

Philadelphia - July 30-August 1

San Diego 1 - August 1-2

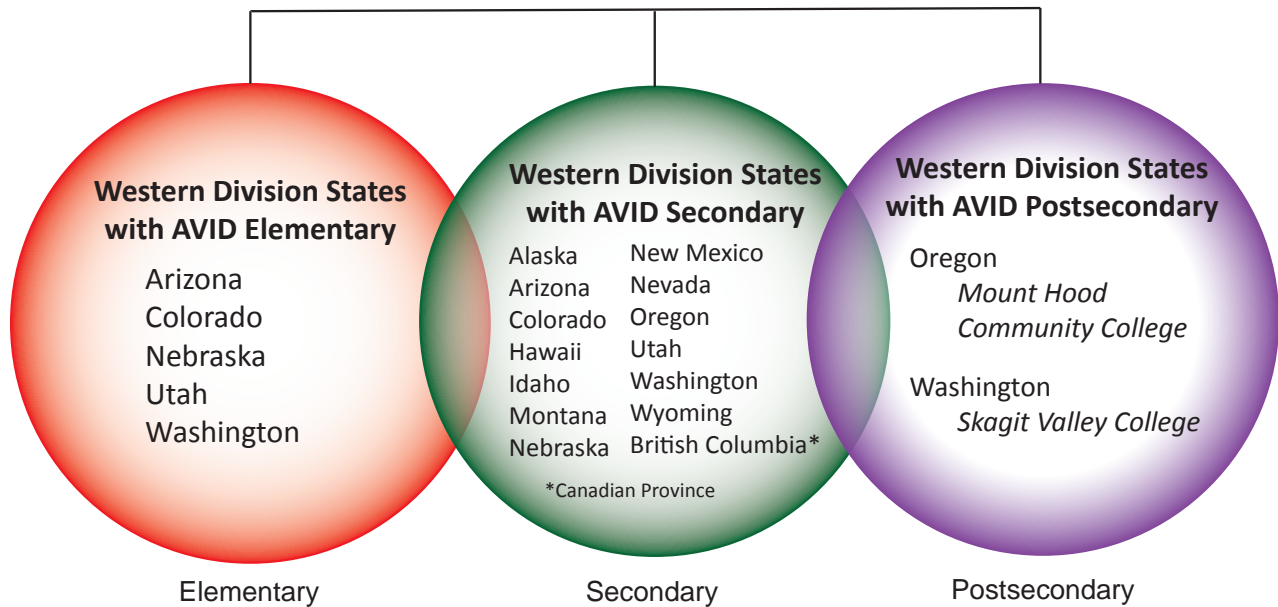
San Diego 2 - August 6 -8

GROWTH IN THE AVID WESTERN DIVISION

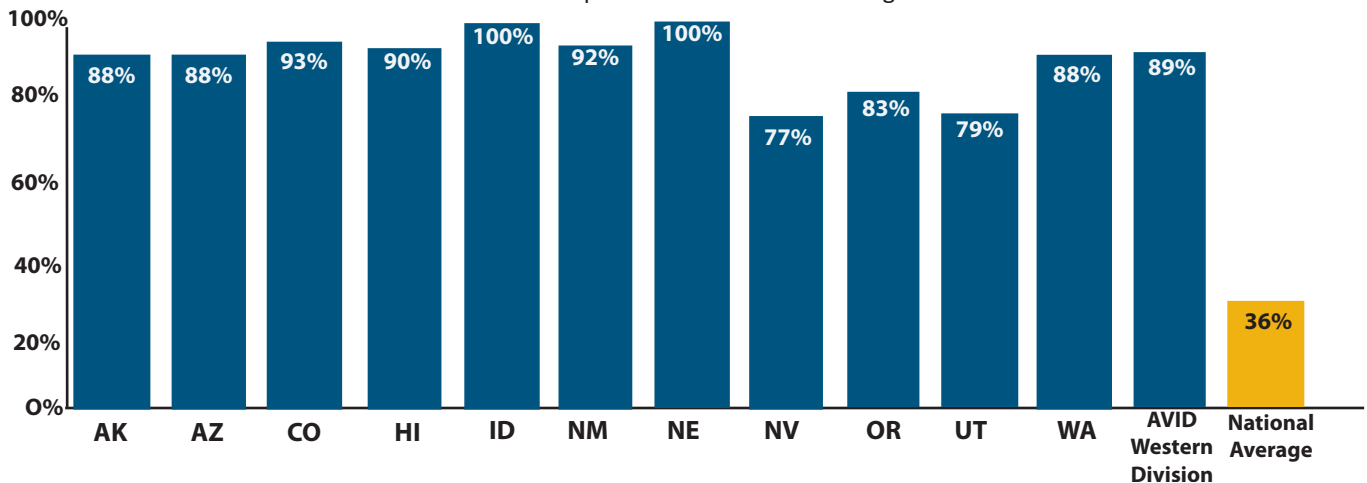


YEAR	NUMBER OF SITES	YEAR	NUMBER OF SITES
1997	11	2004	121
1998	15	2005	202
1999	19	2006	282
2000	27	2007	372
2001	38	2008	450
2002	52	2009	516
2003	83	2010	598
		2011	678

AVID College Readiness System



2011 AVID Western Division Seniors Completing College Entrance Requirements Compared to the National Average



NATIVE AMERICAN EXCELLENCE IN THE WESTERN DIVISION



During AVID's 2011 National Conference, the Western Division was represented by two of our Native American school districts. This was the first time for a Native American school to be featured at an AVID National Conference. Jennifer LaFromboise-Wagner and Tim Ames discussed AVID's transformative effect on all aspects of school life: student aspirations, academic skills, rigor, course alignment with college standards, staff attitudes, administrative leadership, and school culture. We, in the AVID Western Division, are proud to highlight the accomplishments that some of these schools have achieved.

Jennifer LaFromboise-Wagner has worked with the Browning Public School District in Montana for the past 16 years and has been the Assistant Principal for Browning Middle School for the past two and a half years. She is actively involved in implementing AVID within her school and district and is the coordinator for the middle school site.

Tim Ames is serving in his seventh year as Superintendent of the Wellpinit Public School District, centrally located on the Spokane Indian Reservation on the eastern side of Washington State. He brings to his position 27 years of educational experience with a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction. During his tenure, the Wellpinit District has made significant gains in high school graduation, increased numbers of students being successful in postsecondary pursuits, and the integration of culture into the schools.

Wellpinit Public Schools, Washington



The Spokane Tribe of Indians is of the Interior Salish Group, which has inhabited northeast Washington, northern Idaho, and western Montana for many centuries. The Spokane Tribe now lives on 159,000 acres in Wellpinit, Washington, and continues to contribute to the larger community of Spokane, Washington.

Highlights of AVID's impact in Wellpinit:

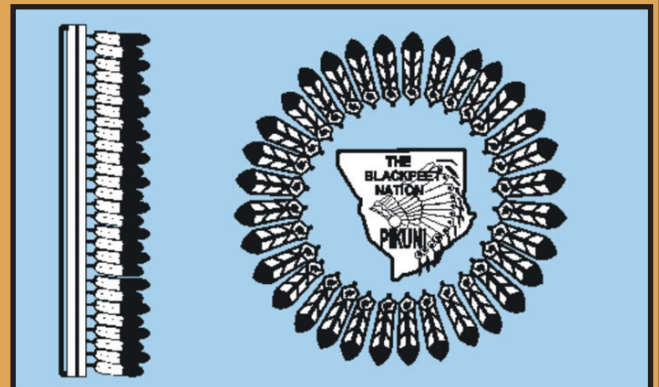
- AVID is fully implemented in grades 4-12
- All students in grades 4-6 are enrolled in AVID
- Common language has facilitated effective professional learning communities (PLCs)
- SAT/ACT scores are improving each year
- Average GPA has increased from 2.8 to 3.39
- All administrators have attended multiple AVID Summer Institutes
- Teachers are seen as the "driving force" for college-readiness
- Wellpinit has received recognition regarding AVID teaching practices from the Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction

Browning Public Schools, Montana

The Blackfoot Confederacy is made up of four tribes. These tribes include the Aammpskapi Pikuni (Southern Piegan), Siksika (Blackfoot), Apah'tsi Pikuni (Northern Piegan), and Kainai (Blood). These nations have their own separate governments ruled by a head chief and councils, but regularly come together for religious and social celebrations. Today, the only nation that resides within US boundaries is the Aammpskapi Pikuni (Southern Piegan); they are located on the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana. The rest of the tribes are located in Canada.

Highlights of AVID's impact in Browning:

- All classes use Cornell Notes
- All staff are trained in Cornell Notes and Critical Reading strategies
- Classes use Essential Questions for lesson focus
- All staff use binders for professional development
- AVID Site Team provides professional development to staff



RATCHET UP!

Inquiring Minds Want to Know...

By Mary Jane Morris

*AVID Site Coordinator and Elective Teacher
Northwest Middle School, Salt Lake City, UT*

Inquiring Minds Want to Know

We have often heard “becoming a lifelong learner” touted as a noble goal in education. I would challenge that the greater goal is to become a lifelong inquirer. Inquiry is at the very heart of academic literacy and is the foundation for postsecondary success. When children enter school, they have an innate ability to wonder, to ask questions, to inquire about the world around them. Far too often, that natural curiosity is crushed by the constraints for the accumulation of knowledge to pass standardized tests. Authentic inquiry recognizes that the process is as important as the final outcome, where multiple answers become possible, not just one correct answer. When students build their capacities to think critically and ask the right questions, they will be prepared not only for the future, but they will be actively engaged in creating that future.

Early in the school year, I introduce an activity called “Brain Busters.” Students are given a group challenge to solve and must rely on their inquiry, communication and collaborative skills. In the simulation games, the students must work as a team to achieve a successful outcome.

Six Thinking Hats is the work of Edward de Bono. Students are given a challenge or problem to solve. As the students work as a team to solve the challenge, each one focuses on a different way of thinking and approaching the problem. Thinking roles include information gathering, evaluation of the possible positive and negative outcomes, emotional responses, creative brainstorming, and implementation. Ultimately, the team works together to integrate their views and develop a solution.

In a mission-based community project, students initiated a student club called Kids CAN (Kids for Community Action Now). The students researched local issues and decided to plan and initiate a community-wide campaign to improve the appreciation for diversity in the neighborhood, which represents over 30 home cultures. Students designed, printed and distributed bumper stickers and organized a multicultural assembly for the school. They wrote a proclamation, organized a signature drive and delivered it at the City Council meeting. Not only did students develop research and inquiry skills, but they also gained a personal connection to their community and developed leadership skills. Their self-confidence soared, as they realized that they are not only vital members of their community, but they also have the capacity to envision and create the future of their community. By increasing the level of inquiry, education becomes authentic, relevant and rigorous.

Resources which I have found helpful include *Playfair* by Matt Weinstein and Joel Goodman, *Silver Bullets* by Karl Rohnke, *Six Thinking Hats* by Edward de Bono and *The Kid’s Guide to Service Projects* by Barbara Lewis.

Mary Jane Morris was named the 2010 Utah Teacher of the Year. She has also been recognized as a 2011 Teacher Speaker during AVID Summer Institute, Fulbright-Hayes Scholar to Malaysia, Fulbright Memorial Scholar to Japan, as well as an Eleanor Roosevelt Fellow. Mary Jane has been the AVID Elective Teacher and Site Coordinator at Northwest Middle School for four years.

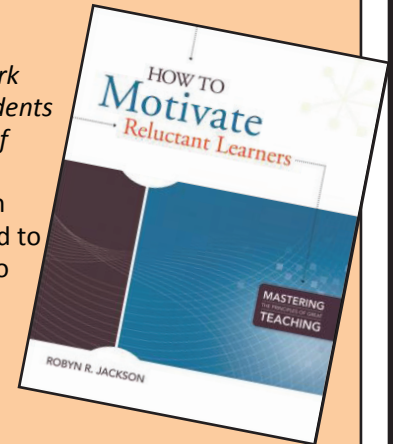


Book Review: *How To Motivate the Reluctant Learner*

By: Robyn R. Jackson

In her book, *Never Work Harder Than Your Students and Other Principles of Great Teaching*, Dr. Robyn R. Jackson identifies seven principles that can be used to transform any teacher into a master teacher. Those principles are:

1. *Start Where Your Students Are*
2. *Know Where Your Students Are Going*
3. *Expect to Get Your Students There*
4. *Support Your Students*
5. *Use Effective Feedback*
6. *Focus on Quality, Not Quantity*
7. *Never Work Harder Than Your Students*



Dr. Jackson’s newest book, *How to Motivate Reluctant Learners*, takes an in-depth look at principle one. For those of us who were lucky enough to attend AVID’s 2011 National Conference, we had the privilege of listening to Dr. Jackson speak to the essence of rigor and equity for all students. Principle one, ‘Start Where Your Students Are,’ is all about relationships. Basically, we get back from our relationships what we put into them. As a former science teacher, I am very familiar with mutualistic relationships. These types of relationships occur throughout nature, where two organisms of different species **WORK TOGETHER**, and **BOTH** receive some sort of benefit. This can be illustrated through the example of the honey bee and the flowering plant. Bees benefit in this relationship because they get to eat, while flowering plants benefit because they get to reproduce. It is a win-win situation for both species. Dr. Jackson speaks about **investing in your relationship** with your students in order to see dividends on the other end. Throughout this book, Dr. Jackson looks at the interactions that take place between students and teachers, where there are opportunities to either strengthen transactions (thus building mutualistic relationships) or weaken transactions (thus moving toward a more mutually destructive relationship). Robyn Jackson understands what rigorous instruction is, and she also understands that relationships have to be developed in order for students to blossom in those rigorous courses.

—Reviewed by
Gordon Mosher