

From one classroom of 32 students to serving 2 million students today, AVID has made the dream of college a reality for countless individuals.



## 1966

Mary Catherine Swanson started her teaching career in 1966, a time in education when students were commonly sorted by their perceived abilities. She learned early on that there was less of a difference in the students' abilities than differences in their experiences at home and at school. She discovered that a teacher's job was to provide the missing background pieces while quickly accelerating the rigor of the coursework in a manner that was supportive, encouraging, and interesting to the student.

## 1979

Mary Catherine's 14 years of teaching experience, including every high school grade level and ability group, gave her the confidence to assert that with the proper amount of support, capable but underachieving students from non-academic backgrounds could be prepared for the rigors of college. Students would need to be placed into the most rigorous college-preparatory classes. She hypothesized that students already enrolled in those classes would be academically capable tutors for AVID students and would benefit socially from the experience.

## 1980

Teachers at Clairemont High School had low expectations for students bused in from disadvantaged areas of San Diego, which caused a belief that these students could not succeed. Mary Catherine Swanson, now the English Department head as well as a teacher, believed if students were willing to work hard she could teach them the skills needed to be college ready.

In the fall of 1980, 32 students enrolled in the first AVID class at Clairemont High School. Thirty of those students remained four years later. Twenty-eight enrolled in four-year universities, and two enrolled in community colleges.

## 1982

In an effort to not send underprepared students to college, Mary Catherine decided to establish a partnership with colleges in the San Diego area to explore requirements for college readiness. The AVID collaboration with the various segments of postsecondary education regarding curriculum was named the Clairemont Cooperative Academic Project (C-CAP).

A C-CAP Compendium published in 1982 outlined the first schoolwide professional development used in AVID. Mary Catherine went into individual classrooms to teach model lessons, which AVID tutors then carried out in their assignments with students.

## 1983

A set of college-preparatory writing guides were written for high school English classes, and a set of "writing-to-learn" materials and lessons were prepared for non-English classes. These materials were the basis of the first published AVID curriculum contained in *An AVID Handbook and Curriculum Guide, A Working First Edition*, dated 1986.

## 1984

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1984 saw the beginning of the Writers' Assistance Program, in which teachers at all 17 high schools in the city of San Diego were paid to participate in after-school sessions based on those developed at Clairemont High School. The college preparatory writing guides were introduced into English classrooms citywide. Although the Writer's Assistance Program only lasted two years, it was the first attempt at accelerating "districtwide AVID."

The San Diego Unified Schools Research Department conducted a report on the status of graduates of the class of 1984 six months after graduation. Clairemont ranked fourth among 17 high schools in the number of graduates enrolled full-time in college, even though Clairemont students had the lowest socioeconomic status in the district. Clairemont tied for second place with the prestigious La Jolla High School for graduates enrolled in college academic programs. Clairemont was first in graduates who attended college full-time while working part-time and first in graduates enrolled in colleges within the county. Clairemont's overall CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) score from 1983–85 increased 46.6%, while the district's score only increased 17%. Clairemont High's math score increase was 35%, while the district's increase was 12.5%.

## 1985

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In 1985, the AVID C-CAP project won the prestigious National Council of English Teachers' Award as a National Center of Excellence.

## 1986

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By 1986, Mary Catherine could account for 137 AVID students enrolled in college, and four high schools in the San Diego Unified School District had started AVID programs.

The AVID system proved so successful at Clairemont High School that the California Department of Education granted funds to disseminate the AVID program throughout San Diego County.

## 1987

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The San Diego Unified Board of Education mandated that all district high schools implement AVID. By June of 1987, AVID had placed more than 600 ethnic and linguistic minority students in college-preparatory courses and provided monthly professional development and curriculum to 14 AVID sites. Thirty sites were on track to implement AVID in the fall of 1987, enrolling more than 1,500 students.

## 1988

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In 1988, 30 high schools and six middle schools within San Diego County were implementing AVID. Ramona High School in Riverside County, California, adopted AVID, becoming the first school outside of San Diego County to do so. An AVID Policy Board was formed that included Mary Catherine, California state representatives, University of California and California State University chancellors, community college board presidents, and superintendents from five major San Diego school districts. A Memorandum of Understanding set specific goals for each segment to achieve regarding college eligibility and retention. A high school validation process was initiated to measure AVID's success or failure.

## 1989

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The first AVID Summer Institute was held at the University of San Diego from August 21–25, 1989, with 258 attendees. Initiated by Mary Catherine as the core of AVID professional development, the first Summer Institute offered seven training strands, four breakout sessions, and two Site Team planning sessions.

## 1990

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AVID expanded to 45 high schools and 35 middle schools within San Diego County, as well as programs in Riverside and Whittier, California. The first AVID contracts for work outside San Diego County were developed. Validation records show that 15 high schools had significantly increased their college eligibility rates among all graduating students, and dropout rates had dramatically decreased.

## 1991

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Mary Catherine Swanson won the \$50,000 Dana Award for Pioneering Achievement in Education, the first public-school teacher ever so honored. The award brought national recognition and growth for AVID. The county superintendent of schools encouraged Mary Catherine to start a not-for-profit entity for AVID to serve more geographically diverse schools. Dr. Hugh Mehan, of the University of California, at San Diego began research on the AVID program; he found 88% of AVID graduates were still enrolled in college, with a grade point average of 2.46.

## 1992

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AVID Center was established as a nonprofit to help serve schools across the nation and around the world. AVID Center would help ensure schools had the professional learning and resources they needed to deliver AVID with quality and fidelity, no matter the location.

## 1994

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AVID was implemented in 377 schools. The growth goals for this year focused on building regional capacity, developing more demonstration sites, creating regional training institutes, building capacity for data collection, research, and establishing local, regional, and statewide networks. Legal work began on separating the AVID nonprofit from the San Diego County Office of Education and the ownership of trademarks and copyrights. A formal AVID Alumni Association was chartered.

## 1995

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An AVID Padres Scholarship program was initiated. AVID was implemented in 414 schools in California, Colorado, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Virginia, and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA), with over 1,000 students graduating. An Eastern Division was established with a part-time director and several part-time consultants.

## 1996

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AVID had expanded to all regions of California, as well as many other states and DoDEA. In July of 1996, AVID Center officially opened its first office at McConaughy House in Heritage Park, a historic part of Old Town in San Diego, California. Clarence Fields, a member of the first AVID class in 1980, joined the AVID Center Board of Directors.

## 1997

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AVID curriculum was aligned with curriculum standards in the states it served, and elementary AVID was studied. A technology director was hired, and an AVID website was rolled out. A full-time director was hired for the Eastern Division. The AVID Center Board focused on marketing plans, developing AVID messaging and branding, and quality control issues with expansion.

## 1998

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The AVID Certification program expanded to include affiliate, certified, and certified with distinction status. The Write Path curriculum was developed for schoolwide AVID, and directors were hired for the Western and Central Division offices, as well as an associate director for the Eastern Division office. The Dana Foundation provided a grant to commission Jonathan Freedman, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, to write a book detailing the founding of AVID.

## 2000

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AVID was implemented in over 1,000 schools in 20 states and several countries through DoDEA. A large 20th anniversary celebration was held at the annual Summer Institutes, with 18 of Mary Catherine Swanson's original 30 AVID students attending the celebration at the San Diego Institute. *Wall of Fame*, Jonathan Freedman's book describing the founding of AVID, was unveiled in a reader's theater format, and copies were distributed to Summer Institute participants. An AVID Founder's Award for outstanding contributions to AVID was created, as well as a Community Services Award.

## 2001

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Mary Catherine Swanson was featured as America's Best Teacher by *TIME* magazine, highlighting her simple philosophy of raising expectations and giving students the support they need to increase college acceptance rates. The article noted that AVID had become widely regarded as one of the most effective educational reforms ever created by a teacher. Mary Catherine also won the \$25,000 McGraw Prize in Education presented at the New York Public Library. AVID was now in 1,273 schools in 21 states, Canada, and DoDEA, with 95% of AVID students enrolled in college.

## 2002

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A new AVID logo was rolled out at the annual Summer Institutes, and AVID was named one of the top 10 nonprofits in the United States by *Worth* magazine.

## 2003

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The College Board co-sponsored the first-ever AVID National Conference. Today, AVID National Conference is the premier forum to discuss and share best practices, attracting thousands of thought leaders and educators from across the nation annually.

The Michael and Susan Dell Foundation began awarding college scholarships of \$20,000 to AVID students across the nation. Strands for Summer Institute grew to more than 40 different offerings, and Institutes had record attendance.

## 2004

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AVID was implemented in 30 states and DoDEA and enrolled 127,019 students in 1,902 schools. The AVID mission statement was revised to say that AVID would focus on ALL students, especially those least served in the middle. AVID's National Conference, co-sponsored with the College Board, enrolled more than 300 participants.

## 2005

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AVID implemented a new Certification Report and Self-Study Continuum with 11 Essentials. AVID celebrated its 25th anniversary with the publication of *25 Years, 25 Stories*, a new book featuring stories of AVID students and teachers. More than 500 participants attended AVID's National Conference.

## 2006

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Mary Catherine Swanson retired as executive director of AVID in May. In June, AVID Center announced the selection of Jim Nelson, Superintendent of the Richardson Independent School District, Texas, and former Commissioner of Education in Texas, as its next executive director.

## 2007

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AVID Elementary launched nationwide, allowing young students to develop strong academic habits early to provide the academic foundation needed to start on a path to college and career success.

## 2008

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The AVID for Higher Education program was developed with support from Traveler's Insurance and pilot-tested at two colleges. The AVID Excel pilot began at five middle schools in Garden Grove, California, in 2008. Students committed to two-week long summer courses, called AVID Summer Bridge, and the seventh and eighth grade AVID Excel Elective courses offered during the academic school year.

## 2009

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Australia implemented AVID in one school district. The Summer Bridge programs were piloted from 2009–2011, with a limited national rollout in 2012, serving approximately 3,100 students in 31 school districts. Each program was composed of 15 four-hour units, usually taught over a three-week period, and was filled with collaborative, high engagement lessons and solid math or science content connected to national math and science standards. The Summer Bridge programs encouraged student acceleration and interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) courses and fields.

## 2010

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AVID for Higher Education launched, allowing AVID to reach educators and students at all levels, K–16, through customizable professional learning and by helping colleges strengthen their student services and the freshman experience.

AVID unveiled a new mission statement that more clearly reflected its mission to help all students: "AVID's mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society."

## 2012

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AVID Center and Rice University collaborated to provide professional learning in leadership and academic best practices for administrators, counselors, and teachers in 65 schools. Academic and college-preparatory events at Rice University offered opportunities for AVID students to be a part of the culture of a prestigious university.

## 2014

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Dr. Sandy Husk joined AVID Center as chief executive officer in January 2014, bringing more than 17 years of experience implementing AVID in the three districts where she had served as superintendent. In her first year as CEO, AVID impacted nearly 1 million students and trained over 47,000 educators.

## 2015

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AVID introduced AVID Excel nationwide at Summer Institute to interrupt students' path to long-term ELL status, accelerate their language acquisition, and put them on a path to AVID and college preparatory coursework.

## 2018

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AVID is implemented in more than 6,400 schools in 47 states across the U.S., plus schools in DoDEA, Canada, and Australia. AVID impacts 2 million students in grades K–12 and 50 postsecondary institutions.