



# From IR to 7-Star:

## How AVID Activated a Schoolwide Culture of Learning at Bryan Adams High School

### CASE STUDY

10 min. read

Resource by **AVID**®



As one of the oldest campuses in the Dallas Independent School District, Bryan Adams High School has seen its fair share of academic triumphs, but it has also had some formidable challenges.

## In the early 2010s, Bryan Adams High School was deemed an Improvement Required (IR) campus.

*In Texas, schools have five years to improve their IR status or risk consequences from the state, such as closure or district takeover.*

### Failing to Pass State Standards

The Texas Education Agency identified the East Dallas high school as underperforming based on a rubric that includes student achievement, student progress, closing performance gaps, and postsecondary readiness.

The school was also experiencing other challenges. “Enrollment was going down, and Bryan Adams was not seen as a school that parents wanted to send their kids to,” Principal Ryan Bott said. “There was an overall lack of strategies or systems in place to help students get to college and be successful.”

There was also a lack of confidence within the community that students could make it to college, and

unfortunately, the reality was that “very few” students were actually enrolling in two- and four-year colleges.

Something needed to change—and the school’s leadership team, as well as administrators, knew it was time to explore ways to support educators and reinvigorate the high school.

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**“Not too long ago, Bryan Adams was in a really bad place as an Improvement Required campus—and that’s not where you want to be. Only a decade ago, we were asking ourselves, ‘Is this school going to be taken over?’”**

— Principal Ryan Bott

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# How did the 2,164-student high school flip the script on its uncertain fate and write the playbook for preparing students to become leaders in the future?

## An AVID Partnership was leveraged.

*The AVID approach is based on the belief that every student is capable of conquering a rigorous curriculum when the appropriate skills and support are in place.*

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**“It was a case of, what can we do to increase the number of students that are enrolling and sticking with a two- or a four-year college. We were determined to find the best program out there to enable students to do that.”**

— Principal Ryan Bott

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AVID emphasizes student agency, encouraging students to build relationships, overcome obstacles, and exercise their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills to reach their full potential.

Bryan Adams’ staff would need to embrace AVID’s schoolwide leadership model to provide professional development to faculty and shift the school to a more future-forward, student-centered approach.



## When Bryan Adams committed to high-fidelity AVID implementation schoolwide, the program was brought to life across four domains:



### Building a Network of Leaders

- Bringing on a dedicated AVID Site Coordinator
- Building a 22-member AVID Site Team of Bryan Adams core and elective teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff



### Creating a College-Going Culture

- Introducing college visits, Commitment Day, and Senior Grad Walk
- Exposing students to college-going opportunities and pathways



### Connecting Teachers with Systems and Training

- Implementing AVID professional development schoolwide
- Attending AVID Summer Institute or AVID DigitalXP™



### Adopting Researched Best Practices for Instruction

- Schoolwide instruction focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading (WICOR®) in small-group settings
- Advisory meetings with weekly leadership lessons, organizing planners, grade reflection, goal setting, and collaborative skills
- AVID tutorials and performance assessments



**Bryan Adams implemented AVID  
at the highest levels of fidelity to  
shift to a schoolwide culture of learning.**

Through professional development, like AVID’s Summer Institute or AVID DigitalXP, the high school’s teachers were educated and inspired with tangible actions that they immediately brought into their classrooms. They were also supported by Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where they could collaborate to discuss AVID strategies, ask questions, and share tips with fellow educators.

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*“It’s contagious to see your colleagues and students succeed,  
which motivates educators to engage with AVID.”*

*— Sarah Foster, Assistant Principal at Bryan Adams*

## Journey to Achieving the AVID Effect

To say Bryan Adams has come a long way since committing to AVID implementation is an understatement.

"I'm in my eighth year at Bryan Adams, so I've seen the transition of what AVID has done for the school as a whole," said Johnathon Yates, AVID Coordinator at Bryan Adams. "They rate schools for distinctions in Texas, and my first year here, I believe we were one or two stars out of seven.



**Then we started implementing AVID across the board and ended up earning seven stars for back-to-back years."**

School leadership and staff at Bryan Adams attribute their success in receiving seven stars (the highest rating possible) to partnering with AVID to create a culture that supports educators through professional development and resources that drive transformation.

**And excitement for AVID is not just at the faculty level, as students also feel supported and empowered to reach their goals.**

"Bryan Adams has adopted AVID's philosophy of investing in relationships. Because of this, many students think of their school as a family and a community they can rely on for support throughout their time here," Yates added.

**DURING THE 2018–2019  
SCHOOL YEAR,**

**60%** of all  
Bryan Adams teachers  
were AVID trained.

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**NOW, THE SCHOOL  
SETS THE STANDARD!**

**80%** of educators  
are AVID trained.

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**AVID'S WICOR\* STRATEGIES ARE  
ROUTINELY IMPLEMENTED INTO LESSONS.**

Teachers embrace  
research-based best practices  
and focus on WICOR\*  
techniques to help  
students thrive.

\***W**riting, **I**nquiry, **C**ollaboration,  
**O**rganization, and **R**eading

# Student Surveys Say...

**97% of students** view the program positively.\*

## “AVID is...”\*

guidance.

a place where  
we can be a family  
and be successful.

responsibility.

a way of learning  
that helps us  
advance in life too.

how I stay  
organized and  
it encourages me  
to aim higher.



*\*According to a 2019–20 survey of AVID Elective students at Bryan Adams High School*

# Academic Triumphs

AVID has had a monumental effect on Bryan Adams High School students, educators, and administrators who went “all in” to implement the program.



AVID and Bryan Adams’ dedicated staff and students have completely changed the school’s course.

**It’s now considered a top-notch college preparatory high school.**



Bryan Adams was named an **AVID National Demonstration School** in recognition of its high-quality implementation in 2019!

**During 2019–20, the school saw high-water marks for college enrollment, and students were awarded more scholarship money than ever before—even during a year impacted by COVID-19.**

## By the Numbers

(2019–20 Bryan Adams Graduating Class)

**73%**  
of seniors

were admitted to a four-year institution.

**90%**  
of seniors

were admitted to two-year institutions.

**\$1,032,144**  
in scholarships

was awarded to Bryan Adams AVID Seniors.







## Looking Ahead

Principal Ryan Bott plans to continue expanding AVID to equip even more students with college readiness strategies and continue engaging teachers in professional learning that upholds the schoolwide culture of learning.

Ready to **activate**  
**a culture of success**  
at your school or district?

**Connect with AVID today!**

