

AVID ELEMENTARY INDEPENDENT RESEARCH FINDINGS

*Building the Foundation for
College and Career Success*



Executive Summary

AVID Elementary is making a measurable difference in the lives of students who need it most. This independent research study of more than 230,000 students and 1,800 educators across eight school districts reveals how AVID Elementary builds critical academic skills, transforms classroom culture, and sets students on a path to long-term success.

Key Research Findings

Elementary Outcomes

By the end of elementary school, students with two or more years of AVID Elementary experience saw statistically significant impacts on English Language Arts (ELA) and Math test achievement:

- Students showed statistically significant positive impacts on ELA, scoring 0.08 standard deviations higher ($p < 0.001$) and being roughly 5 percentage points more likely to meet grade-level proficiency than similar students without AVID Elementary ($p < 0.001$).
- The study found negative effects in Math scores (-0.11 SD, $p < 0.001$), suggesting a need for better integration of AVID strategies into Math instruction.

Middle School Success

The benefits of AVID Elementary extended into middle school, where students demonstrated stronger overall academic performance:

- GPAs in core subjects were 0.15 standard deviations higher than their peers—roughly the same as receiving an A instead of a B in one class in a six-class schedule.
- There were small, marginally significant positive effects on ELA (0.03 SD, $p=0.056$) and Math (0.03 SD, $p=0.065$) test performance, roughly equal to 3–4 additional weeks of school.

Transformed School Culture

Educators reported substantial improvements in student behaviors that drive academic success:

- Enhanced student organization and time management
- Increased engagement and active participation
- Stronger collaboration skills
- Greater readiness to learn

WHAT IS AVID ELEMENTARY?



Overview

AVID Elementary is a schoolwide instructional model that provides lesson planning and assessment resources, supported through ongoing professional learning. Rather than introducing new content, AVID Elementary equips educators to embed proven learning strategies into their existing instruction.

WICOR® Strategies

At the heart of AVID Elementary are five interconnected strategies, known as WICOR, which develop the skills successful students use every day:

- **Writing:** Develops communication skills and deepens understanding through reflective writing.
- **Inquiry:** Encourages critical thinking through questioning and exploration.
- **Collaboration:** Builds teamwork and communication through structured peer interaction.
- **Organization:** Establishes systems for managing materials, time, and learning.
- **Reading:** Strengthens comprehension and analytical reading skills.

The Research Study

Study Design and Scope

This independent evaluation, which was conducted by ECNorthwest and Calypso Strategy and Research, used a quasi-experimental, mixed-method design, employing Inverse Probability of Treatment Weighting (IPTW) to balance AVID Elementary and comparison students. The research analyzed outcomes across:

- Eight school districts in three states
- 14 years of grade 2–8 data (school years 2011–12 through 2024–25)
- More than 1.3 million student-year records (representing approximately 360,000 unique students) were examined, with about 935,000 student-year records (representing 230,000 unique students) used in the analytic sample
- Surveys from over 1,700 educators and interviews with long-tenured school leaders
- School level fidelity of implementation scores for 34 AVID Elementary schools

From a B to an A

A 0.15 standard deviation increase in GPA—the equivalent of improving one class grade in a six-class schedule.

“Using Philosophical Chairs and Socratic Seminars has transformed how students discuss and defend ideas.” – AVID Elementary Teacher

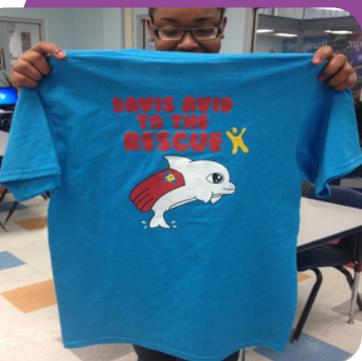
DETAILED FINDINGS: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL OUTCOMES



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



Students with two or more years of AVID Elementary experience showed statistically significant gains in English Language Arts. Test scores improved by 0.08 standard deviations, and students were 5 percentage points more likely to meet proficiency standards than comparison students. These improvements align with AVID Elementary's emphasis on writing, reading, and inquiry strategies.



MATHEMATICS



The study found negative effects on Mathematics performance, with test scores decreasing by 0.11 standard deviations and a 9-percentage-point decrease in meeting proficiency benchmarks. These findings raise important questions about instructional balance and the integration of WICOR strategies in Mathematics instruction.



ATTENDANCE



There were no statistically significant impacts of 2 or more years of AVID Elementary on average daily attendance or chronic absenteeism during elementary school.



MIDDLE SCHOOL OUTCOMES



The most striking middle school finding was the substantial improvement in core subject GPAs. Students with 2 or more years of AVID Elementary earned GPAs 0.15 standard deviations higher than comparison students—roughly the same as receiving an A instead of a B in one class in a six-class schedule. Researchers also found small, marginally significant positive effects on ELA and Math test performance, roughly equal to 3–4 additional weeks of school. This suggests that the organizational skills, study habits, and learning strategies developed through AVID Elementary help students navigate the increased academic demands of middle school successfully.

What Educators Are Saying

Survey responses from over 1,700 educators and interviews with experienced AVID Elementary practitioners provided critical insights into how the program works in practice. Educators consistently identified *Organization* and *Collaboration* as the most transformative elements of WICOR, followed by Inquiry, Writing, and Reading. Most respondents indicated daily or near daily use of those strategies.

The Power of Professional Learning

Educators who participated in multiple AVID trainings and had recently attended training reported higher confidence in implementing WICOR strategies, more frequent use of all WICOR elements, and greater perceived student gains. This finding underscores the importance of sustained, high-quality professional development as a driver of program success.

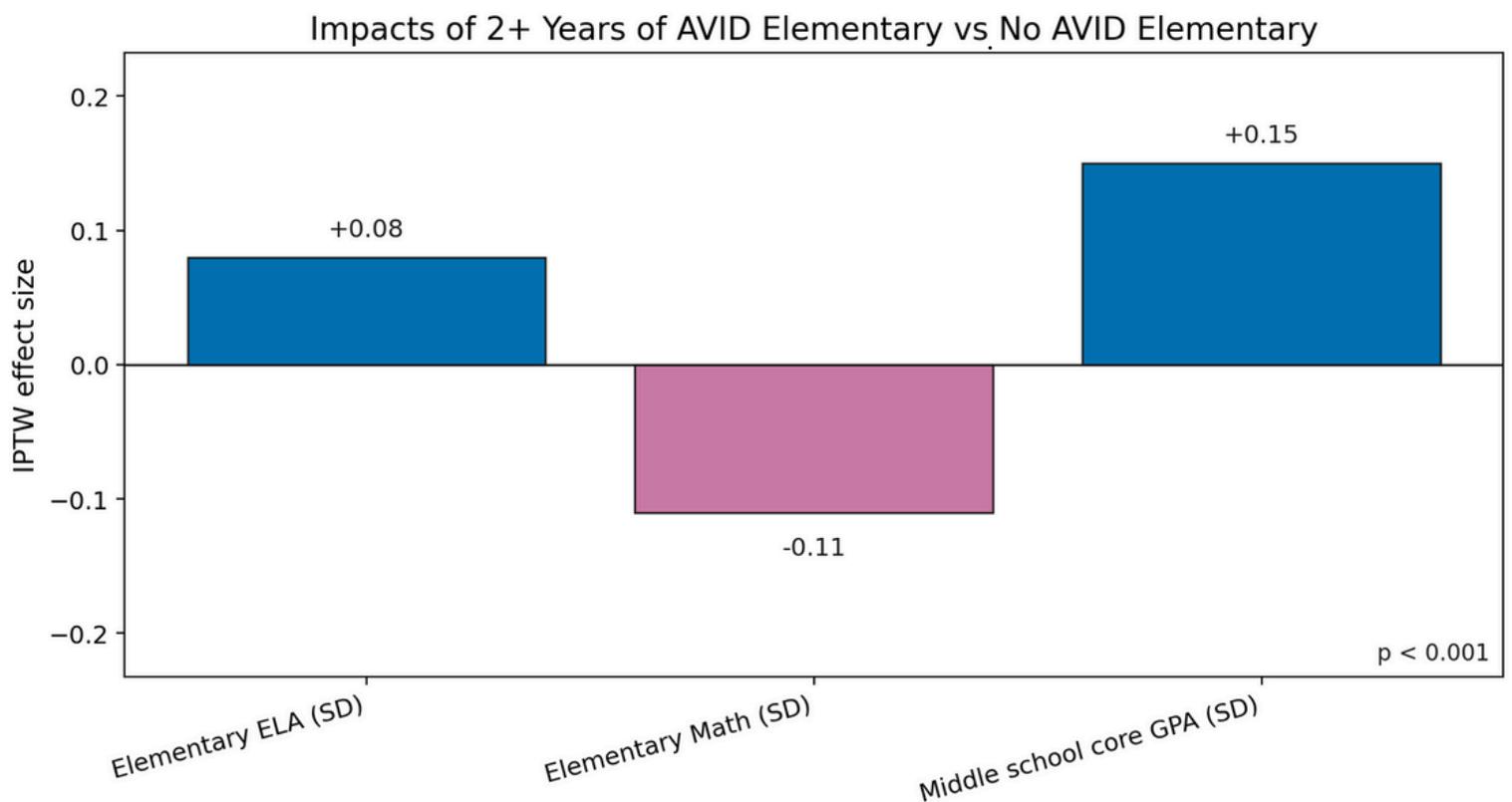
Sustained High-Quality Implementation Matters

Not all AVID Elementary implementations are equal. The study found clear evidence that implementation fidelity is associated with stronger student outcomes.

Schools with higher ratings on AVID's Certification Self-Study, and later the Elementary Coaching and Certification Instrument—particularly in the Instruction domain—showed higher student test scores in both elementary and middle school ELA and Math.

The Leadership domain of AVID's fidelity instruments was also strongly associated with elementary, but not middle school, ELA and Math scores (0.25 SD, $p < 0.001$; 0.25 SD, $p < 0.001$, respectively).

This demonstrates that when schools implement AVID Elementary with sustained high levels of quality, students substantially benefit, and those benefits have lasting impact.



Conclusion

This wide-ranging, independent evaluation demonstrates that AVID Elementary is achieving its fundamental goals: equipping students with the skills they need for academic success while transforming classroom culture and instructional practice.

For schools and districts committed to preparing all students for college and career success, AVID Elementary offers an evidence-based pathway forward. The program's curriculum-agnostic design, focus on transferable skills, and emphasis on sustainable implementation make it a valuable tool for building educational opportunities for all students.

Most importantly, this research demonstrates that with the right support, training, and commitment to implementation quality, schools can make a lasting difference in students' academic trajectories.

“Students produce more of the dialogue now. They’re taking ownership.”
– AVID Elementary Teacher

About the Research

Research Team

This independent evaluation was conducted by [ECONorthwest](#) and [Calypso Strategy and Research](#), with support and guidance from AVID Center staff and leadership.

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