

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS:

*A Case Study
on Increasing
College
Readiness
through
AVID*



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#CollegeReady | #RedefiningReady



This is the second of two publications that focus on improving college, career and life readiness for students, particularly those who have been underrepresented in higher education. Both publications frame the larger context of readiness through case studies that analyze the effectiveness of [College Spark Washington](#) (CSW)'s [College Readiness Initiative](#) (CRI).

The first publication, *[An Integrated Approach to College, Career & Life Readiness: A Case Study on Personalizing Guidance](#)*, features the program [Career Guidance Washington](#) (CGW, [@waOSPI](#)), which takes a student-centered approach to college, career and life readiness by helping students understand who they are, where they're headed and how they'll get there.

This second publication, *[An Integrated Approach to Academic & Social Supports: A Case Study on Increasing College Readiness through AVID](#)*, features the program [Advancement Via Individual Determination](#) (AVID, [@AVID4College](#)), which provides strong academic and social supports that prepare students for college and create a school-wide culture of college readiness.

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OVERVIEW

The [College Readiness Initiative](#) (CRI), sponsored by [College Spark Washington](#) (CSW), was launched in 2006 with grants to 39 secondary schools serving low-income students in Washington State. The six-year grants supported the implementation of a personalized guidance system and/or the AVID program. A longitudinal evaluation of the initiative by [Baker Evaluation Research and Consulting](#) (BERC) showed promising and informative results: course-taking patterns and achievement improved, and high school graduation and college enrollment rates also increased.

We sought to answer the following questions: What is currently known about readiness? Did the CRI achieve its goal to help more low-income students be college ready when they graduate from high school? And most importantly, what lessons have been learned to help promote equity and increase access to college and career prep, with longevity and at scale? These driving questions center around the themes of readiness, impact of initiatives and lessons learned.

AUDIENCE & PURPOSE

Our goal is to reach people representing each aspect of readiness partnerships, including foundations and grantmakers, school leaders, state agencies and policymakers, program providers, and advocates.

The purpose of this publication is to illuminate the need for readiness, to narrate the story of CSW's support for the high-impact AVID program, and to illustrate how partnerships can enhance college, career and life readiness initiatives by creating environments that generate the results desired for students.

The message is multifold: Students need support. Case studies are helpful. Partnerships can work. Accordingly, this publication focuses on three main components:

- 1 **The Need for Academic and Social Support.** This section details the need for support; frames current trends in college, career and life readiness; and discusses the importance of partnerships.
- 2 **Case Study on AVID.** This section offers a case-study analysis of CSW's College Readiness Initiative, including an overview of the initiative and its partnerships and an impact assessment of its implementation of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program.
- 3 **Lessons Learned and Recommendations.** This section presents recommendations for ways in which leaders from across sectors (philanthropy, business, community and education) can collaborate to create a more equitable future for all young people.

By working together, partners can ensure that targeted academic and social supports drive equity and provide access for underrepresented students.

COLLEGE READINESS

College readiness refers to the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed without remediation in credit-bearing general education coursework at a college or university.

Too many students fail to meet the requisite credentials—and lack the ongoing academic and social support—to enroll in and successfully complete college-level work.

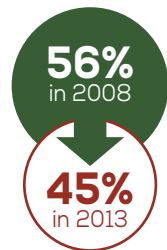
Although U.S. high school graduation rates reached an all-time high of 83 percent in 2015,¹ college preparedness and enrollment has been on the decline nationally. Graduating from high school is simply no longer enough to ensure success in college or life.

Still, there is hope, and there are examples of pockets of success (one of which will be shared via the case-study portion of this paper). However, it is important to understand the breadth of the challenge by exploring indicators such as college enrollment, remediation and persistence.

College Enrollment. While long-term historic trends point to an increase in college enrollment, over the past 10 years enrollment has actually declined, particularly for low-income students. Between 2008 and 2013, low-income student enrollment decreased from 56 percent to 45 percent.²

College Enrollment

College enrollment among **LOW-INCOME STUDENTS** dropped.




College Remediation. For those who do enroll, the remediation rates are embarrassing. The Community College Research Center (CCRC) reports that 68 percent of all two-year college students and 60 percent of public four-year college students take at least one remedial course.³ Considering the following transcript data and [National Assessment of Educational Progress](#) (NAEP) scores, these rates are really no surprise.

College Remediation Rates

The Community College Resource Center reports that

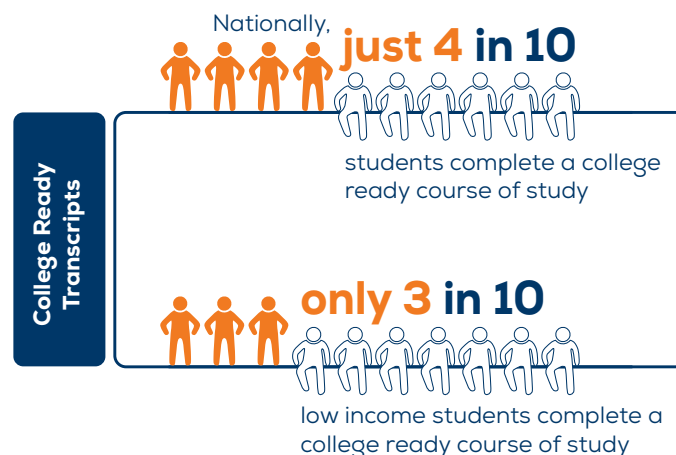
more than

2 in 3
OF ALL TWO-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

and more than

3 in 5
OF PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS

TAKE AT LEAST ONE REMEDIAL COURSE.

Transcripts. According to The Education Trust's report "Meandering Toward Graduation," only four in 10 students complete a course of study that makes them eligible for college, and less than one in 10 completes a course of study that prepares them for college and career (defined as three or more credits in a broad career field).⁴ The data is even more disparaging for students from underrepresented populations.

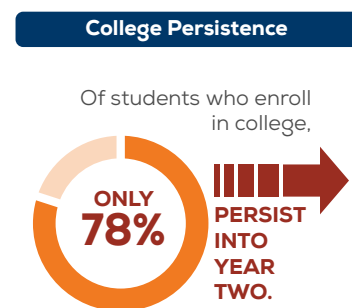


Math and reading scores. The remediation issue is further underscored by NAEP scores. The **Fordham Institute** indicates that scores in math and reading have been flat for 25 years. Each year, fewer than four out of 10 seniors rate as being "college ready."⁵ Because more than 10 percent of students drop out of school before even taking this test, we can conclude that, at least by traditional measures, about two-thirds of U.S. students leave school unprepared for success in college. As Fordham's Mike Petrilli said, "We've succeeded at motivating more young people to enroll [in college], but we haven't prepared more of them to succeed at it."⁶

College Persistence. Even if more students are graduating from high school and attending college than ever before, it is difficult to stay in college. Of students who enroll in college, only 78 percent persist into a second year of college.⁷

As if those challenges aren't enough, the cost of traditional college continues to escalate, at about a three-percent increase per year.⁸ The **College Board** reveals that much of the cost increase is due to the campus arms race (i.e., the push to build fancy dorms and upscale dining halls) while the bargain hunter will find net tuition (which takes financial aid, scholarships and grants into account) close to flat.

The lack of academic and social preparation, complicated by rising costs, demonstrates a need for stronger academic and social supports to ensure college enrollment and persistence.



Yet there are signs of progress indicating that efforts to provide a personalized system that better prepares students for success in their postsecondary and life endeavors—and provides meaningful engagement during middle and high school—serves students more effectively. A targeted implementation of the AVID program, made possible by CSW, has shown evidence that gaps can close to boost student readiness. Academic and social supports matter.

35 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Closing the achievement gap and preparing students for success in an ever-changing global society are significant challenges that the education community has faced for a long time. For more than 35 years, AVID has implemented a comprehensive system based on the premise that if you raise expectations and provide support, students will rise to the challenge.

A Comprehensive Approach to Readiness

AVID is a nonprofit academic-support system that helps students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education succeed in challenging college-preparatory courses and prepare for college. AVID is based on the philosophy that if students are held accountable to the highest standards and are provided academic and social support, they will rise to the challenge.

Having begun with one high school and 32 students in 1980, AVID now impacts more than 1.5 million students in more than 6,200 schools and 43 postsecondary institutions in 46 states and 16 other countries/territories.⁹ The AVID College Readiness System spans elementary through higher education and focuses on the successful implementation of 11 “Essentials” that drive impact.

AVID’s goal is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. AVID transforms the instruction, systems,

leadership and culture of an entire school by having students enroll in the AVID Elective class taught by trained AVID teachers. To ensure college readiness and improved academic performance, AVID Elective teachers provide academic training, manage tutorials, work with faculty and parents, and assist students in developing long-range academic and personal plans. Subject-area teachers, counselors, administrators and district administrators experience professional learning and help create a college-going culture through the use of Schoolwide AVID. While originally focused on students in the academic middle, in 2010 AVID changed its mission to include all students by focusing on school-wide efforts.¹⁰

AVID results suggest the approach is working, with 98 percent of students graduating on time, 94 percent planning to attend a postsecondary institution and 93 percent completing college-entrance requirements.¹¹

Lessons from AVID

Educators learned a lot as AVID began to spread years ago, and AVID has taught many lessons since then about the power of increasing expectations and providing strong academic and social supports. AVID’s initial lessons serve as guideposts and inspiration, and have been expanded upon to provide direction for the future of academic and social supports. Some of the most important points AVID has established are:

- » **Skills and behaviors for academic success can be taught.** Students can learn skills, behaviors and techniques for academic success, especially when teachers have been trained and coached in effective instructional strategies to build a college-going culture.

- » **A culture of positive academic peer pressure can be created.** Building cultures of college and career readiness and confidence in the ability of all students to achieve their dreams creates momentum to transform individuals, classrooms and communities.
- » **Academic mindsets can be fostered.** AVID has taught us that one of the best strategies for building academic mindsets is to create an environment of high expectations. As the program's name suggests, personal achievement can be gained through hard work and determination.
- » **Tutor processes and relationships are powerful.** Whether one-to-one or in a small group setting, providing intensive support through tutorials boosts engagement and progress.
- » **Strong student-teacher relationships make all the difference.** The primacy of relationships shows up again and again in teaching and learning.

There is still a need for students, particularly those from underrepresented populations, to receive more personalized and targeted support to make these lessons a reality.

DEEPER LEARNING

Real college and career readiness requires mastery of core academic content, thinking critically and solving complex problems, working collaboratively, communicating effectively, learning how to learn, and developing academic mindsets. The [Hewlett Foundation](#) calls these [deeper learning competencies](#).

Evidence confirms that deeper learning experiences and environments positively influence student academic and life outcomes.¹² A decade of research confirms that school leaders have a vital impact on student achievement.¹³ As more schools realize that a focus on the development of deeper learning outcomes can contribute to college and career readiness goals, it becomes increasingly important to build a cadre of leaders prepared to both create and sustain these environments in order for students and teachers to thrive.

GETTING SMART



PODCAST

AVID CEO [Sandra Husk](#) said that leading school districts in three states taught her two important lessons about readiness: teacher-student relationships are vital, and systems must demand—not just offer—equitable access to college readiness for all students.

AVID's instructional framework reflects and promotes the skills and attitudes needed for success in college and careers. Improving students' critical thinking, reading and writing abilities allows them to participate and succeed in rigorous college preparatory courses.

What is WICOR?¹⁴

The AVID Methodology includes use of the following WICOR Instructional Strategies:

WRITING AS A TOOL FOR LEARNING

AVID students religiously use the Cornell note-taking system to clarify thoughts and improve writing and language skills. Students take notes and add clarifying ideas and questions.

INQUIRY

An emphasis on inquiry methods, including deep levels of questioning, serves to engage students in their own learning. The goal is to enhance understanding and provide practice for higher order thinking.

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Students have an active responsibility to learn amongst a collaborative group of teachers, students and tutors.

ORGANIZATION

Recognizing the importance of organizational skills, time management and prioritization for academic and social success, AVID provides support for such processes.

READING TO LEARN

AVID includes instruction in critical and academic reading to enhance comprehension skills. There is a focus on connecting to prior knowledge, understanding text structure and using text-processing strategies.

STRENGTHENING AND INTEGRATING ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS

Concurrent with AVID's model, there has been a national movement recognizing the importance of enmeshing academics and social-emotional learning (SEL).

Academic and Social-Emotional Learning are Inextricably Linked

In partnership with CASEL, the Aspen Institute recently launched the National Commission on Social, Emotional and Academic Development to build consensus around a lexicon, metrics and strategies. Director Shirley Brandman has indicated they intend to advance a new term, Social, Emotional and Academic Development (#SEAD), to more fully embrace and support academic goals so they are no longer viewed as separate or optional. The commission is co-chaired by Stanford's Linda Darling-Hammond, Business Roundtable president John Engler and CASEL chair Tim Shriver.

The recognition that academic development and SEL are inextricably linked has been groundbreaking, and has led to the emergence of strategies for embedding SEL into the curriculum. There are numerous strategies that maximize academic and social support.

10 Strategies for Strengthening Academic and Social Supports

Evaluation of the CRI and other AVID deployments suggests 10 lessons for improved readiness:

- » **Teach skills for academic success, including organization and time management.** In their research-based book *Thriving in College and Beyond*, authors Cuseo, Fecas and Thompson indicate that college students "who have difficulty managing their time have difficulty managing college," and point to the importance of developing these skills while students are still in high school. Management of time and energy and learning to set priorities can make the difference between success and failure for new college students.
- » **Embed tutorials in the learning process.** Relationships and processes developed through *tutoring can power academic success*. AVID tutorials rely on small group processes and tap into local college students and online resources, making tutoring affordable at scale.
- » **Build strong student-teacher relationships.** AVID CEO Sandy Husk said that leading districts in three states taught her about the primacy of student-teacher relationships. Gallup's report *The Engagement Gap* indicates that excellent teachers, when supported by school leaders, keep students engaged in the learning process and hopeful about their own futures. In fact, students who strongly agreed that their school is committed to building students' strengths and that they have a teacher who makes them excited about the future are almost 30 times more likely to be engaged learners than peers who strongly disagreed with both statements.

- » **Create positive peer groups for students.** Increasing [social awareness](#) and peer-to-peer bonds is an important part of the AVID Elective class, where students identify with a positive peer group (and even own it with t-shirts or other identifiers, as in other school clubs and co-curricular activities). As outlined in a [CDC report on school connectedness](#), students' health and educational outcomes are influenced by characteristics of their peers, such as their social competence or whether the peer group supports pro-social behavior (e.g., engaging in school activities, completing homework assignments, helping others).
- » **Develop academic mindset and culture.** AVID schools teach personal achievement through hard work and determination. Stanford professor [Carol Dweck said](#), "In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to reveal my weaknesses,' you say, 'Wow, here's a chance to grow.'"
- » **Expect college eligibility for all students.** According to Husk, it's not good enough to offer access to a college preparatory curriculum—systems must demand equitable access for all students. AVID offers middle-school courses that build academic language and leadership skills and an overall sense of commitment to school and college readiness goals. These courses prepare students for the rigors of a college preparatory curriculum in high school.
- » **Encourage stretch courses and provide real-time support.** Community [college research](#) suggests that students stretching to take for-credit "corequisite courses" with academic support rather than developmental courses were more likely to be successful in college. Arizona State University has 25 years of [positive experience with stretch courses](#). AVID's Schoolwide program encourages stretch course-taking, including a [partnership with International Baccalaureate](#).
- » **Support dual enrollment.** Many states, districts and networks have better aligned their [graduation requirements](#) with college eligibility requirements, and are improving access to dual-enrollment opportunities. Students benefiting from the College Readiness Initiative doubled their pursuit of dual credits.
- » **Promote college aspirations.** AVID schools create college-going aspirations by making students aware of the value of college, supporting college visits and providing dual-enrollment options.
- » **Focus on college completion.** A decade ago, leading school networks observed that even though they were sending nearly all of their students to college, completion rates were disappointingly low. In addition to focusing on deeper learning and building persistence skills, AVID and leading networks are increasing efforts to improve the college match process and provide support to students in college. Such efforts include AVID's [Student Success Initiative](#), Aspire Public School's [College for Certain](#) and [Achievement First Alumni Support](#), and [KIPP Through College](#).

LEVERAGING ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORTS TO REACH BROADER AIMS

To meet the demands of a society constantly influenced by exponentially increasing amounts of technology and the global marketplace, expectations for students have expanded. Accordingly, the definition of readiness has expanded, and the need to provide adequate support for students is more important than ever. The [American Association of School Administrators](#) (AASA) launched an initiative called [Redefining Ready](#), which identifies three aspects of readiness:



Further, AASA has worked to identify indicators that quantify readiness. Students who are considered college ready have met certain academic indicators and standardized testing benchmarks (e.g., GPA, SAT and ACT scores).¹⁵ The indicators of career readiness are student identification of a career interest, along with certain behavioral and experiential benchmarks (e.g., attendance, community service, workplace experience and extra-curricular participation).¹⁶ Life readiness indicators are currently under development, but will look to factors such as growth mindset, grit and the perseverance needed to accomplish goals.¹⁷

[MyWays](#) from Next Generation Learning Challenges is another national initiative supporting broader indicators of college and career readiness. In addition to content knowledge, the outcome framework includes creative know-how, habits of success and wayfinding abilities.

Evidence continues to mount that college and career success requires more than content knowledge. As the AVID program suggests, real readiness includes self-management, collaboration, communication and decision-making skills.



SUCCESSFUL CASE STUDY: COLLEGE READINESS INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND

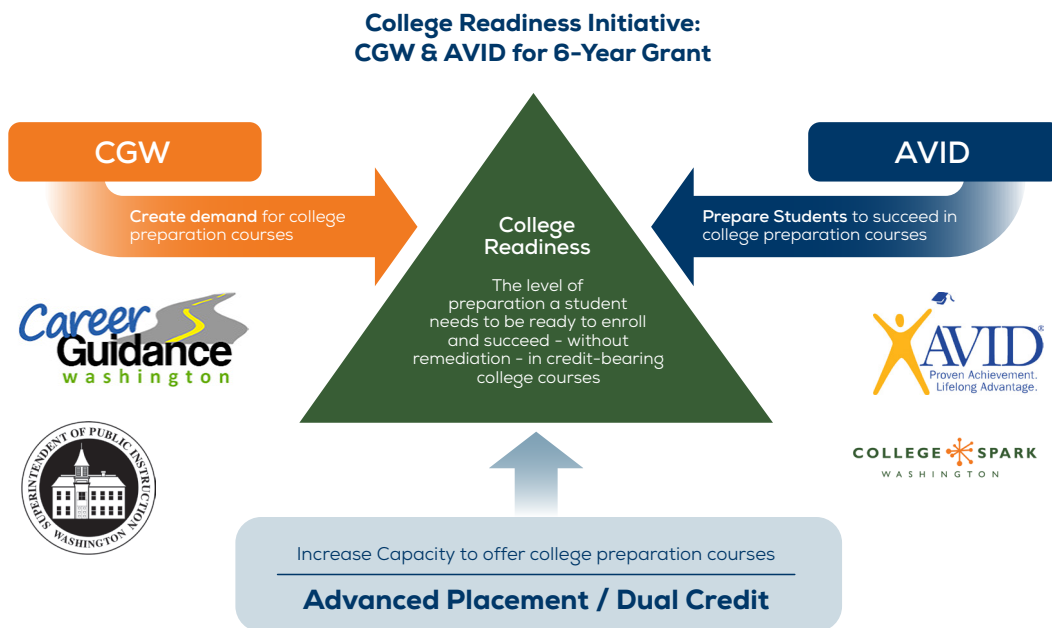
Like the [Lumina Foundation](#), [KnowledgeWorks](#) and [Nellie Mae Education Foundation](#), College Spark Washington was funded with proceeds from the sale of a student loan portfolio. Since 2005, CSW has awarded more than \$50 million to college readiness and degree completion programs. In partnership with Washington State, CSW invested \$9.5 million in 2006 to fund a nine-year [College Readiness Initiative](#) (CRI). The results were promising and informative: course-taking patterns and achievement improved, and high school graduation and college enrollment rates improved.

A decade ago, the College Spark board was troubled by postsecondary attainment and remediation rates that indicated that many students were ill-equipped to overcome barriers to their career goals. They also noticed that students from underrepresented populations were particularly disadvantaged. At the time, only 21 percent of low-income students were considered to be adequately prepared for college-level work, compared to 54 percent of students in higher socioeconomic brackets.¹⁸

After determining the problem in terms of the current state of readiness, and developing desired outcomes, College Spark conducted research to identify solutions and potential partners. Wanting to make an impact in their home state of Washington, CSW staff researched over 50 programs that were being utilized throughout the state.

To address these issues and to help more low-income students graduate college ready from high school, CSW partnered with Washington State's education agency, the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) (OSPI), to launch the CRI, which provided six-year grants to 39 low-income schools in an effort to prepare more students for college and career.

CSW's theory of change (as captured in the following image) asserted that by providing the right supports through implementation of Career Guidance Washington and/or AVID, and emphasizing the importance of rigorous coursework, educators would increase college readiness rates. The initiative changed cultures and drove metrics by equipping students with the ability to focus on who they were, where they were headed and what it would take to get there. Throughout the CRI, College Spark collected data that supported valuable insights into improving school cultures and implementing large-scale school readiness programs.



CRI Partnerships

Partnerships can help form cultural, curriculum and social supports. Furthermore, civic and philanthropic leaders can facilitate shared employment goals, drive emerging job clusters and help ensure a thick web of youth and family support services. AVID is an example of a program partner that not only provides support to the schools, but also spurs schools to be part of a national network. What follows is an example of how one organization embraced this broader definition of readiness and leveraged collective action to bridge the gap for students in the state of Washington.

After identifying the state's lead education agency, OSPI, as the intermediary partner, and AVID and Career Guidance Washington as program partners, College Spark launched a competitive grant process to identify implementing partners. Details about these and other CRI partners are outlined on the next page.

Funder and Lead Partner: College Spark Washington

College Spark Washington funds programs across Washington state that help low-income students become college ready and earn their degrees. College Spark makes grants to organizations and institutions that are helping low-income students improve their academic achievement, prepare for college life and graduate from college.

College Spark has awarded more than \$50 million to college readiness and degree completion programs since becoming grantmakers in 2005. In addition to the CRI, some examples of CSW-supported initiatives include Guided Pathways (the pathway to a degree), the College Ready Math initiative, the Community Grants Program, Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count and more.

Intermediary Partner: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Working in partnership with OSPI, College Spark's CRI initiative provided six-year grants to 39 low-income schools in order to prepare more students for college and career.

Implementing Partners: Low-Income Schools

The CRI provided funding to 39 low-income schools (16 high schools, 19 middle schools and 4 combination schools) in 13 different districts ranging from urban to rural. Participating schools received funding to implement CGW, AVID or both. Schools could also apply for additional funds to increase dual-credit access and success through programs such as [Advanced Placement](#), [Project Lead the Way](#) and [College in the Schools](#).

Program Partner: OSPI and Career Guidance Washington

Career Guidance Washington or CGW (formerly called Navigation 101) is a college and career readiness initiative that includes advisory curriculum, student-led conferences and personal learning plans.

Program Partner: AVID

AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) is a California-based but internationally implemented academic support program that helps students prepare for college and succeed in challenging college prep courses.

Advocacy Partners

In addition to the formal partners listed above, numerous advocacy partners were part of College Spark's CRI process. Such partners include, but are not limited to, the [Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board](#), the [Partnership for Learning](#), [Ready Washington](#), the [League of Education Voters](#), [Washington School Counselors Association](#) and [Grantmakers for Education](#).

COLLEGE SPARK STORY

In 2004, College Spark Washington became a grantmaking foundation with a focus on improving college readiness and success for Washington's low-income students. The College Readiness Initiative was one of our first major investments. A great deal of thought and planning went into the decision to support an initiative centered around AVID and Career Guidance Washington; we wanted to invest in programs that had a strong evidence base and that were gaining traction in Washington.

The issue of college readiness is complex. It encompasses academic and social-emotional readiness; expectations and support; helping students develop meaningful goals; and helping them understand the difference between various postsecondary options. One of the things that excited us about AVID was the way it addressed each of these aspects of college and career readiness. AVID does an exemplary job of raising expectations for students and giving them support to meet those expectations. Additionally, students in the AVID Elective receive mentoring and advising that makes their college planning more ambitious and realistic than it would be without this support.

Our experience with the initiative has shown what is possible when we make long-term investments in partners and schools that share our vision. It wasn't until the fourth year of the initiative that we started to see progress in student outcomes. If we hadn't made a long-term commitment to AVID, we wouldn't have been around long enough to see those gains, which were possible only because everyone involved in the initiative was able to be honest about what was working versus what wasn't, and each partner was willing to make changes along the way. Ultimately, it was the work of the school principals, counselors and teachers that drove the improvement in college readiness, which was demonstrated throughout the initiative. Their commitment to preparing students for college and delivering guidance in a more equitable way is what made the difference.

—Christine McCabe, Executive Director of College Spark Washington,
and Heather Gingerich, Senior Program Officer

Desired Outcomes

The desired long-term outcomes for the College Readiness Initiative can be organized along the following three themes:

- 1 **Culture of College Readiness.** *Goal:* Increase school emphasis on college preparation for all students, including aspirations, student culture and staff culture.
- 2 **Credentials for College Readiness.** *Goal:* Increase preparation for college as reflected in advanced course enrollment, completion of dual-enrollment courses, transcript readiness and graduation rates.
- 3 **College Enrollment Reflecting Readiness.** *Goal:* Improvement in student college-going, remediation, persistence and completion rates.

To achieve these outcomes, College Spark provided implementation support over the course of six years in order to maximize student impact and lay the foundation for sustainability. This case study is part of a two-year impact study that assesses outcome data, implementation status and sustainability success efforts.

FEATURED PROGRAM: THE AVID READINESS SYSTEM

As referenced earlier, **AVID** is a California-based, internationally implemented academic support program that helps traditionally underrepresented students succeed in challenging college prep courses and prepare for college.

To address issues of equity and access, and to help more low-income students graduate college ready, **College Spark Washington** selected AVID as one of two programs to help achieve their goals as part of their \$9.5 million CRI investment.

AVID focuses on the successful implementation of 11 “Essentials,” which are core to program effectiveness (see feature on the right), to drive impact. AVID is based on the philosophy that if students are held accountable to the highest standards and are provided academic and social support, they will rise to the challenge.

AVID’S 11 Essentials¹⁹

AVID identified 11 characteristics of implementation that are essential for maximum impact on student success.

- 1 Targeted student selection process
- 2 Voluntary participation by students and staff
- 3 AVID Elective during the school day
- 4 Enrolling in rigorous curriculum
- 5 Instruction promoting organizational skills and academic self-management
- 6 Curriculum with strong emphasis on writing and reading
- 7 Instruction promoting inquiry, collaboration and critical thinking
- 8 Use of trained tutors
- 9 Data collection and analysis
- 10 Committed school and district resources for program costs and certification
- 11 Collaboration of active interdisciplinary site team

AVID Overview

Goal: To close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society.

What: A middle school through postsecondary college readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll and succeed in higher education and succeed in life beyond high school.

Where: Over **6,200 schools** throughout **46 states** and **16 other countries/territories**.

How: AVID transforms the instruction, systems, leadership and culture of an entire school by having students enroll in the AVID Elective class. This class is taught by trained AVID teachers, who provide academic training, manage tutorials, work with faculty and parents, and assist students in developing long-range academic and personal plans. Subject-area teachers, counselors and administrators seek to create a college-going culture through the use of AVID methodologies school-wide.

Impact: Of the 42,418 high school seniors in AVID partner schools:

- » **98 percent** graduated high school on time
- » **94 percent** had plans to attend a postsecondary institution
- » **93 percent** completed four-year college entrance requirements
- » **63 percent** planned to attend a four-year college²⁰

Specific to the College Spark Washington Initiative, student impact can be seen in many areas, including:

- » More positive perceptions regarding school
- » Improvement in student college-going, persistence and completion rates
- » Significant gains in course-taking patterns and transcript readiness

In order to gauge the impact of AVID on grantee schools and students, data was gathered related to the program's central themes: creating a school culture of college readiness, ensuring all students earn credentials for college readiness, and increasing college enrollment and persistence rates.

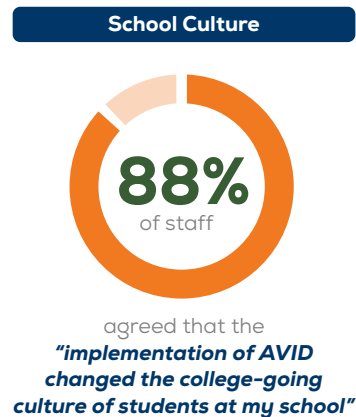
Culture of College Readiness

One goal of the CRI was to increase the emphasis on college preparation for all students within participating schools, including school culture, student aspirations and parental engagement. As data shows, the AVID program succeeded at making significant gains in precisely these three areas.

School culture. The CRI's positive impact on the college-going culture of grantee schools has consistently been cited as a key outcome. Following the conclusion of the grant period, Getting Smart conducted two Impact Study Surveys of program stakeholders, one in 2015 and another in 2016. Survey responses indicate

significant changes in the college-going culture of AVID schools; in fact, 88 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the “implementation of AVID has changed the college-going culture of students at my school.” Furthermore, 80 percent of respondents listed AVID’s impact on culture as the one piece of data that best represents the impact of the grant program.²¹

AVID’s emphasis on school-wide implementation makes a very visible impact: walking in the door of an AVID school, it’s not uncommon to see all students carrying three-ring binders and teachers adorning themselves and their walls with paraphernalia from their alma maters (e.g., attire, pennants and diplomas).



Student attitudes. To learn more about the impact of the AVID program on student culture, BERC surveyed students in the CRI AVID schools and compared responses from students taking the AVID Elective to those not taking the AVID Elective. There were statistically significant differences between the two groups on all factors (including high expectations, satisfaction, teaching and learning, and future focus), with AVID Elective students demonstrating more positive perceptions regarding their schools than non-participants.²² Furthermore, AVID participants rated the “future focus” category (indicating that students perceive they are being prepared for college and career) at or above a 4.0 on a five-point scale.²³

Building a College-Going Culture in Tacoma

Jason Lee Middle School in Tacoma is an AVID National Demonstration School. Principal Christine Brandt works closely with teachers to create a tremendous amount of capacity for teacher leadership through implementation of AVID. Community partners work with the school so students can have additional tutors at the school, which is part of the AVID system.

The school also runs a summer academy program to defeat the “summer slide.” Brandt said, “This has been a game changer. If we are going to do summer work to support students in staying academically stable and growing, we want to do it in partnership with our community. In this case, we work with Peace Community Center to help us run the program.”

Jason Lee teacher Anne Hawkins said, “The students also help plan for guest speakers, which helps to extend our reach in the community. The speakers are so cool—the mayor of Tacoma was one of our speakers. The seventh and eighth graders are doing the organizing, not me. We have a higher expectation of encouraging the students to do it and allowing the students to make things happen.” This is done intentionally, to ensure students have a voice in their school.

The District AVID Director Erin Jones reflected, “Initially, our directors and principals didn’t believe in it, but then something clicked the year that every single middle-school student got binders, dividers and notebooks.” For schools like Stewart that were previously failing and then were not failing, the director reflected, “Maybe this is more than I thought it was.”

AVID National Demonstration Sites in Washington

AVID identifies schools that are exemplars for others to learn from and visit. There are 287 AVID schools in Washington, and six are demo sites.²⁴

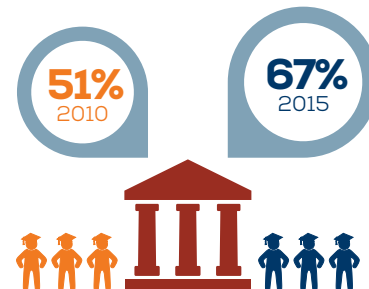
- » Federal Way High School, Federal Way School District
- » Jason Lee Middle School, Tacoma School District²⁵
- » La Venture Middle School, Mount Vernon School District
- » Mount Baker Middle School, Mount Vernon School District
- » Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon School District
- » Totem Middle School, Federal Way School District

Student Aspirations. What students aspire to pursue is another key indicator of a college-going culture. BERC's student survey revealed that in 2010, only 51 percent of students wanted to attend a four-year college, but by 2015, 67 percent planned to attend a four-year college.²⁶

BERC's student survey results also state that "a greater proportion of AVID students report that they plan to attend college in the future, compared to other students."²⁷

Student Aspirations

Students from grantee schools who indicated they wanted to attend a four-year college grew from



Teacher Effectiveness. Improvement in academic and social support starts and ends with quality teaching. AVID provides extensive professional development to continue to help teachers improve their craft. Through classroom observations, BERC's evaluation measured alignment with Powerful Teaching and Learning. Teachers who received AVID training exhibited more Powerful Teaching and Learning Components (52 percent, compared to 45 percent for non-trained teachers).²⁸ Alignment was even higher in AVID Elective classrooms (ranging from 60 percent all the way up to 77 percent).²⁹ School-wide CRI AVID implementations also showed increases in instructional alignment, but of a smaller magnitude.³⁰

"Because we have sent a lot of people to AVID training, we have a lot of well qualified teacher leaders," said Lisa Griebel, principal of Miller Junior High in the Aberdeen School District. To boost sustainability, Griebel is encouraging teachers to train other teachers.

"We even made some structural changes to the delivery model of Special Education students; we are starting an AVID-like course for how to model an AVID-like class for our Resource Room students, so they can be more successful," added Griebel.

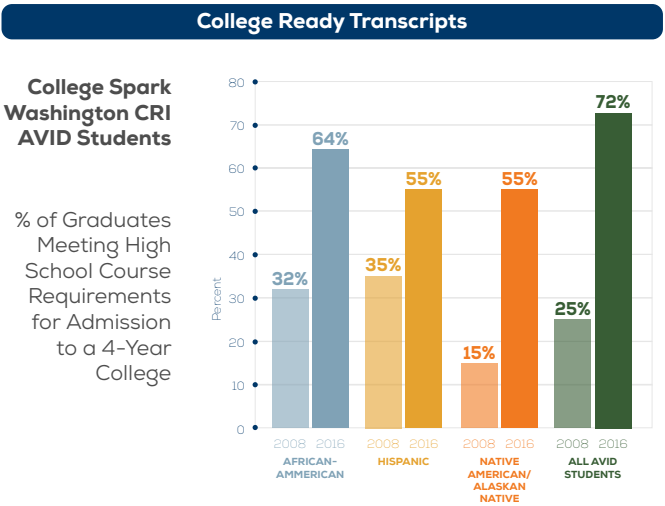
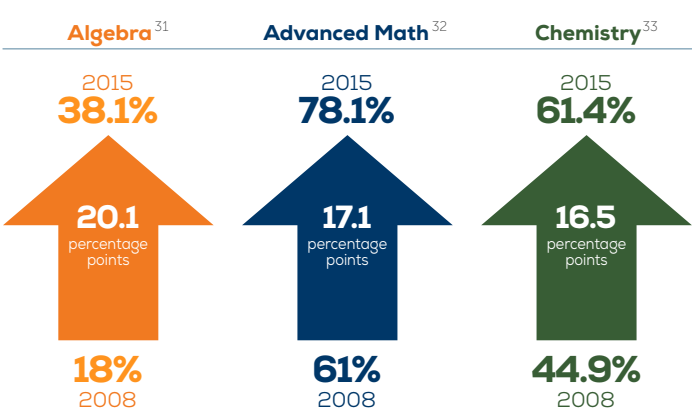
Credentials for College Readiness

Credentials for readiness can be assessed by looking at course-taking patterns, transcript readiness and graduation rates.

Course-Taking Patterns. The first step in students achieving credentials for readiness is increased enrollment in rigorous courses. This was noted across the board in BERC data and supported by Getting Smart’s stakeholder interview process, with findings of significant growth in the number of students taking algebra, advanced math and chemistry.

After getting students to enroll in the right courses, the next step is to translate advanced coursework into transcript readiness by having students succeed in those courses.

Transcript Data. At the beginning of the initiative, AVID school data around transcript readiness indicated that on average, only 38 percent of students had a college ready transcript.³⁴ Considering that all CRI grantee AVID schools are classified as low-income (with some at up to 99 percent free or reduced lunch), this starting point is very similar to data from the Education Trust’s “Meandering Toward Graduation” report, which shows that only three out of 10 low-income students complete a college ready course of study. However, by the end of the grant, 58 percent of all students at AVID schools achieved college ready transcripts, with even greater gains and gap-closing among certain populations.³⁵



Students Will Rise to the Challenge

The change in course-taking patterns at many CRI grantee schools is impressive. Five examples of improvements in graduates meeting high school course requirements for admission to a Washington four-year college include³⁶:

- » Wellpinit High School: 5.9 percent in 2010 to 66.7 percent in 2016
- » Inchelium High School: 23.1 percent in 2009 to 60 percent in 2016
- » Rogers High School: 32 percent in 2010 to 76 percent in 2016
- » Grandview High School: 23 percent in 2010 to 72 percent in 2016
- » Lincoln High School: 29 percent in 2008 to 58 percent in 2016

Dual Enrollment. Dual enrollment (i.e., any dual credit on a high school transcript from Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Running Start, College in High School or Tech Prep) is an important indicator of college readiness.

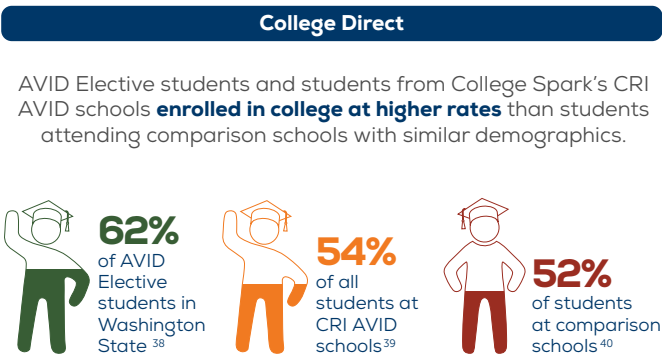
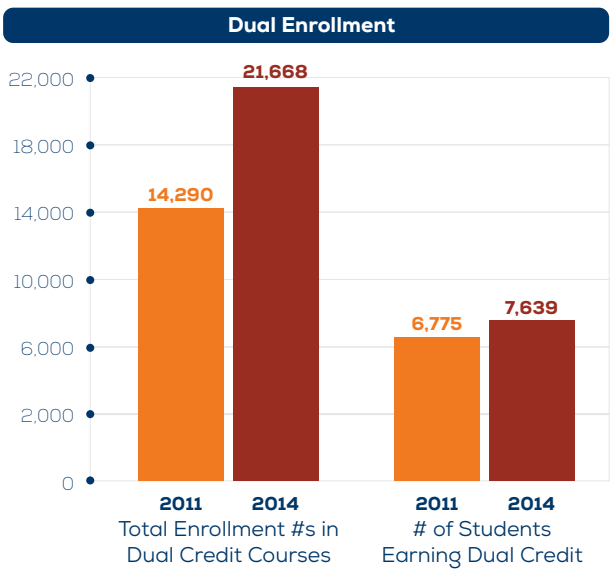
Between 2011 and 2014, the number of AVID students earning dual credit showed a 13 percent increase (from 6,775 to 7,639 students), and the total number of dual-credit course enrollments increased by nearly 52 percent from 14,290 to 21,668 credits.³⁷ In total, the average number of course enrollments per student went from just above two to almost three. Not only are more students earning dual credits, but on average, each student is enrolling in more courses.

College Enrollment
Reflecting Readiness

College-direct and college persistence rates are indicators of AVID’s success on both a national and statewide level.

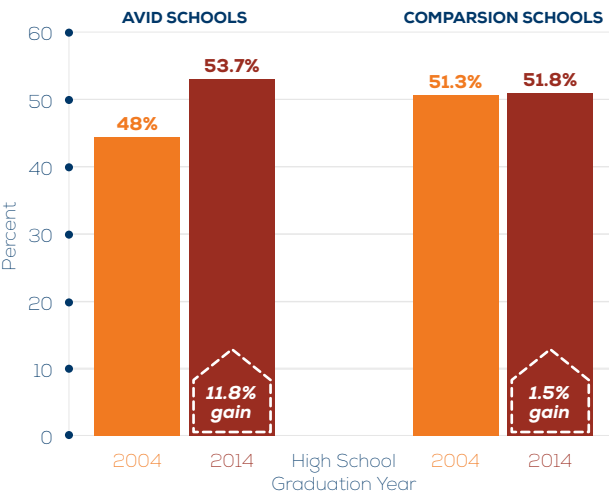
College Direct. AVID Elective students in Washington State—along with all students from CRI grantee AVID schools—enrolled in college at higher rates than comparison schools.

From 2004 to 2014, students from CRI AVID Schools made an 11.8 percent gain in college-direct enrollment compared to a 1.5 percent gain for students at comparison schools with similar demographics.⁴¹ While overall rates are not as high as national rates, the increase is still notable, particularly since these are school-wide numbers and 70 percent of the students at AVID schools were low-income.⁴²

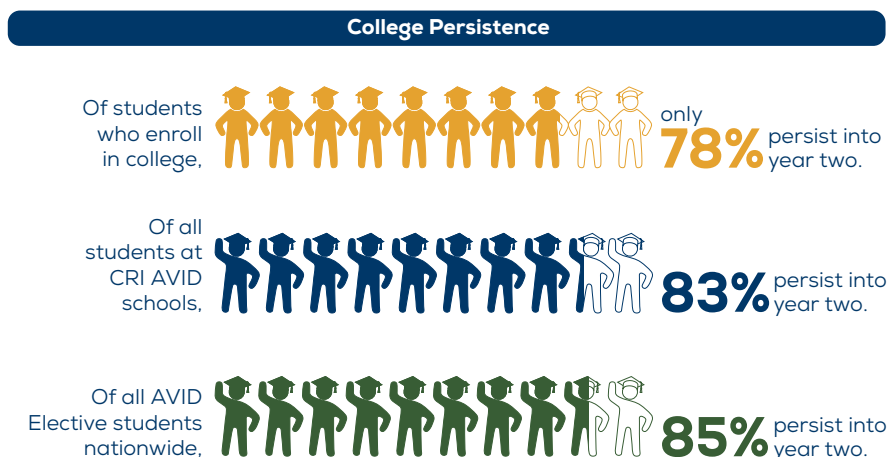


enrolled in either a two-year or four-year college the first fall term after graduating high school.

From 2004 to 2014, students from CRI AVID schools **increased enrollment in either a two-year or four-year college the first fall term** after graduating high school at a higher rate than comparison schools.



Persistence. In 2016, the average student in the 20-and-under age group persisted from the first to second year of college at a rate of 78.1 percent.⁴³ Yet the national AVID Class of 2014 (AVID Elective students) surpassed that figure by almost seven percentage points, with an 85 percent persistence rate into year two of college.⁴⁴ As indicated in the adjacent table, CRI grantee AVID schools reached an 83 percent persistence rate.⁴⁵



Student Persistence Rates⁴⁶
Class of 2006 compared to Class of 2010

	BASELINE Of 100 freshmen in 2002		IMPACT Of 100 freshmen in 2006		INCREASE	
	AVID	Comparison	AVID	Comparison	AVID	Comparison
Graduated from high school	71	72	79	76	11%	6%
Attended college the first year after graduating from high school	36	38	42	39	16%	3%
Persisted into a second year of college or received a 4-year degree*	29	30	35	32	21%	7%
Persisted into a fourth year of college or received a 4-year degree	24	23	26	23	8%	0%

**Note: of those who attended college from AVID CRI schools, 80 percent persisted from the 2002 group and 83 percent from the 2006 group, both above the national average of 78 percent.⁴⁷*

Implementation

AVID's 11 Essentials can be summarized as follows: a voluntary and targeted application processes for students and staff; AVID Elective during the school day; enrolling in rigorous curriculum; an emphasis on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading (WICOR); use of trained tutors; and data collection and analysis. These essentials are critical to implementation, and are supported by AVID's [professional development process](#). AVID monitors implementations through a certification and support process.

Districts and schools benefit from ongoing AVID training and site team processes. According to Getting Smart's Impact Study Survey responses, incorporating and embedding AVID's 11 Essentials has directly benefitted participating schools, especially in the areas of professional development and team-building. Respondents indicated that the community and team-building around AVID was one of the program's greatest implementation strengths. They also favored AVID's professional-development opportunities and the ability to leverage AVID to enhance learning for all students by expanding its practices by grade level and/or school-wide. The conclusion: not only does AVID build better students, it helps build better teachers.

Schools received extensive support to ensure a strong delivery model. Getting Smart's Impact Survey results reflect high degrees of fidelity with implementation:

- » **AVID Essentials.** 85 percent of survey respondents indicated that their level of implementation of each of AVID's 11 Essentials (and collectively, of all of AVID's 11 Essentials) had stayed the same or increased since the end of the grant period. This self-reported information aligns with and is substantiated by the certification numbers in the following section.
- » **AVID Certification.** AVID conducts a rigorous multi-year certification process to monitor and measure implementation fidelity. The number of certified CRI AVID schools almost doubled over the course of the grant. At the end of the 2008 school year, 44 percent of CRI AVID sites were certified. At the end of 2015, 84 percent of CRI AVID sites were certified.



Getting Smart's [Partnerships Propel Readiness Results with a Focus on Equity](#) podcast speaks to the critical role of partners in the process. Strong academic support is essential for students navigating college and career-focused decisions. These support roles are crucial to help students figure out their values and aspirations. The program is designed to prepare students for their future with support from the AVID Elective teacher and school counselor, in order to achieve success for all students, particularly those who are underrepresented.

AVID and Career Guidance Washington support college and career going cultures alone, together and in conjunction with similar programs. AVID and CGW help to create a college and career-going culture in schools. These programs, although different from each other in execution, share the same objectives and the common goal to prepare students for postsecondary life. Similarly, while each program has individual elements of success, they also reportedly work well symbiotically. As grant years progressed, participating schools have revamped their school improvement plans to include college and career readiness goals, which include CGW, AVID and other college and career readiness programs such as GEAR UP.⁴⁸

Integrating AVID and Career Guidance Washington in Bremerton⁴⁹

Bremerton High School, one of the CRI schools that implemented both **Career Guidance Washington** (CGW) and AVID concurrently, has seen significant gains in student achievement and has created a culture of college and career readiness. As described above, these programs share similar objectives and complement each other.

In the spring of 2016, Principal John Polm and Counselor Chris Swanson reflected on their experience with the **implementation and impact of both AVID and CGW** at the high school, noting the importance of strong leadership and the individualization of the curriculum to fit the school. Outlined below are several key system elements (rooted in both CGW and AVID) that propelled Bremerton's success:

Advisory. One of CGW's key elements is an advisory period; Bremerton students can have advisory up to four days per week. Swanson reflected, "Advisory programs have come and gone at some schools. It has been a constant here. We are trying to respond to the unique needs we have at our school, and we are trying to make the advisory program part of the answer to what are we doing about those needs." Often times, AVID Schoolwide strategies (e.g., Cornell note-taking) are taught during advisory.

Plans and Portfolios. As part of the state requirement for a High School and Beyond plan, all students at Bremerton create a plan, maintain portfolios with supporting evidence and meet with their parents to discuss. Swanson believes the school might not have these major components if not for the CRI grant. Not only do students complete a CGW portfolio for postsecondary planning, they also maintain three-ring binder portfolios as part of AVID Schoolwide strategies.

Parent Involvement and Student-Led Conferences. The school credits CGW and AVID with increasing student engagement and parental involvement. When students lead, parents show up. AVID engages parents with family nights and parent involvement events. CGW engages parents via student-led conferences. Swanson boasted about the data, "In the past, we had 23 percent parent attendance [at conferences]. During the grant, we increased parent participation to 82 percent. If you walk into a student-led conference and/or student presentation, you see a level of engagement that would not exist without the grant. This is a student-centered approach."

Presentations. A significant change in the way the students experience school is the senior presentation, which is required to earn credit in advisory and to graduate. Polm said, "It might be a high-stress moment when [students are] presenting in front of a panel about where they are headed and how they are prepared for that, but it is a rewarding experience as well."

Emphasis on Challenging Course Enrollment. The school has also seen increased student engagement through the class-registration process. “Students,” Swanson noted, “have a much better idea of what classes they want to take because of advisory. The students register for what they want and are choosing classes that are right for them and their goals.”

AVID Elective and Schoolwide Strategies. Students in the AVID Elective—and even those who aren’t—all benefit from an increased emphasis on organization, academic mindset and rigorous course-taking patterns. It has taken time for the system to take root, to get more students into those rigorous courses and to help them succeed.

Rigorous Classrooms. The school increased its number of Advanced Placement options from three to 12, and overall there has been a significant increase in students enrolling in more rigorous coursework. Polm shared, “In 2008, 40 percent of students were taking chemistry. By 2016, it was up to 64 percent.”

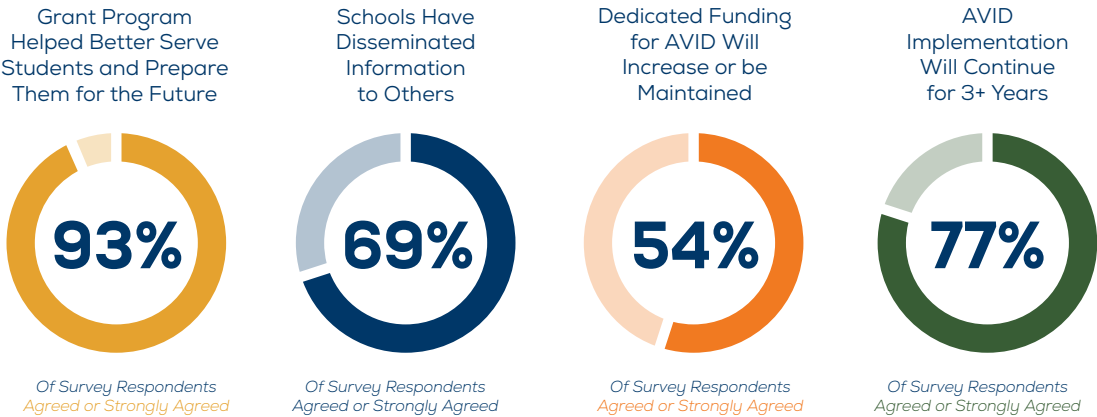
Bremerton has seen steady gains in students graduating with college ready transcripts, from **34 percent meeting requirements in 2010** to **54 percent meeting requirements in 2015**.⁵⁰ In addition, the school’s graduation rate went from approximately **60 percent in 2006** to **approximately 80 percent in 2014**.⁵¹

“Through our CRI programming, an AVID student—who is a hispanic female and single parent—set aspirations to be a dentist. She credits her Career Guidance Washington adviser, AVID Elective teacher and fellow students as huge supports to her success. She has been admitted to the University of Washington, and is on track for a pre-dentistry program.”

—John Polm, Principal at Bremerton High School

Sustainability

Ultimately, College Spark’s CRI had its eye on the future, wanting not only to make an impact on the students served directly by the grant but to impact future students as well. The goal was for schools to be able to sustain the CRI programs on their own following the end of the grant period. Despite the fact that funding for AVID through the grant has ceased, 18 of the 26 schools continue to implement the program via local funding sources. Approximately 70 percent of CRI AVID schools (18 of 26) continue to sustain the majority of the program’s components.⁵²



In summary, data relating to AVID’s impact on preparing students is both conclusive and positive. The biggest challenge, as with most initiatives, is determining how funding will be secured following the grant period. For the 18 grantee schools that continued to implement after the grant period, funding was typically allocated from sources such as Title 1 or Gear Up, or as a line item in the district’s or school’s general budget.

It is also important to look at statewide growth of the AVID program as an indicator of potential sustainability. In 2007, there were 67 secondary sites, and by 2015 there were 218 secondary sites plus 69 elementaries, for a total of 286 AVID schools in the state of Washington. Next year, 50 new schools will begin implementing AVID in Washington as well.⁵³

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the status of readiness in America and the lessons learned by College Spark, we offer the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS AND SUPPORT PROVIDERS

- » **Commit to a school-wide focus on academic support.** Making commitments to writing, reading, critical thinking, organization and research processes works.
- » **Network with others.** One of the benefits of AVID is the opportunity to collaborate with other educators.
- » **Seek out funding and grant opportunities.** Many organizations will support demonstrated practices to increase college readiness.
- » **Embed Social and Emotional Learning.** Integrate social-emotional learning across the curriculum.⁵⁴
- » **Partner with organizations.** There are numerous organizations boosting college access and success. See [50 Organizations Boosting College Access and Success](#).
- » **Encourage mutual responsibility.** "Get every educator in your building involved in advising."⁵⁵
- » **Make it school-wide.** A whole-school model shifts school culture.
- » **Model resilience.** Challenges will include funding, time and full faculty involvement in advising.
- » **Use tools.** There are a growing number of college planning platforms and applications. Some are reviewed in this report: [Personalizing and Guiding College and Career Readiness](#)
- » **Visit schools.** Visiting high-performing schools can be the best way to learn about the culture, practices and systems that prepare young people for college, careers and life. Getting Smart prepared a list of [100 Middle & High Schools Worth Visiting](#), which includes several of the AVID schools from this initiative.
- » **Visit systems.** Getting Smart compiled a [list of 30 school districts](#) that are changing the trajectory of both education and their communities by working on blended, personalized and competency-based learning.

"Our AVID teachers are committed, willing to take risks and focused on building relationships and rapport with their students."

—Todd Setterlund, Burlington Edison High School

"If I could have AVID in every building available to kids, I would do it."

—Erin Jones, College Spark Washington Board Member and former AVID District Director

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADVOCATES AND POLICY MAKERS

- » **Emphasize academic and social support.** Recognize that these are at the heart of the education process.
- » **Strategize around funding mechanisms.** Encourage/establish a funding strategy that links K–12 and higher education, helps achieve the state attainment goal and is aligned with workforce needs.
- » **Emphasize completion.** Design state financial aid programs to promote college and career readiness, along with access and completion for all students.
- » **Invest in professional development.** Recognize the integral role of high-quality teaching.
- » **Establish goals.** Set a state attainment goal for the population, and include both traditional and nontraditional students in the goal.
- » **Align aid.** Ensure state financial aid programs are aligned with state economic goals to expand postsecondary and economic opportunities for all students.
- » **Leverage dual enrollment.** Make college credit and dual-enrollment opportunities available to every student through college in the high school, as well as to high school students on college campuses and/or via online courses. Make course funding portable and avoid double payments to make the program scalable and sustainable.
- » **Pursue alignment.** Ensure high school graduation requirements align with college acceptance requirements.
- » **Plan for credit transfer.** Make community-college credit transferable to any state institution of higher learning.
- » **Implement data systems.** Implement a statewide longitudinal data system that links postsecondary outcomes to K–12 education.

“I’ve seen a transformation take place in the schools, from not having a college-going culture to having one—in some it’s really dramatic. I had worked with a lot of these schools as part of an Advanced Placement grant, but that wasn’t enough. Schools really need to get students ready to take the courses at this level.”

—Barb Dittrich, OSPI Supervisor

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDERS

- » **Conduct research for the program-selection process.** In this initiative, there was a thorough research and vetting process. Do your homework before a big investment.
- » **Recognize the importance of the school-selection process.** Involve multiple stakeholders with a range of perspectives—and possibly an intermediary—to aid selection.
- » **Provide strong support to schools.** Both initiatives were supported with consulting, professional development, ongoing support, data review and more.
- » **Make a long-term investment.** Change takes time, and prolonged funding for implementation was critical to establish systems of support.
- » **Connect to both local and national initiatives** for a combination of grassroots and research-based support.
- » **Establish a process to disseminate learnings.** Ensure others can benefit from your experience and example.
- » **Set and measure clear goals.** Be clear on goals and objectives, and continue to circle back to those when conditions change or results aren't as hoped. Leverage data.
- » **Know your students.** Know the student population you're working with and adapt your plans accordingly.
- » **Know the community.** Understand the unique strengths and challenges within the community that intersect with your goals.⁵⁶
- » **Create opportunities.** Constantly seek to broaden partnership opportunities. Create opportunities for others to join.
- » **Practice teamwork.** Provide deep implementation support. "We all need each other. We can't accomplish what we want to accomplish without each other."⁵⁷
- » **Diversify partnerships.** Establish a diverse set of partnership relationships up front (public, private, government), and realize that things can change.

"We are proud of the quality of the selection process of participating districts, the fact that the grantees stuck with us and the fact that the CRI schools have emerged as models for their peers."

—Christine McCabe, Executive Director of
College Spark Washington

"We believe there was a lot of value in what we did—funding projects, sponsoring system change and creating a culture of academia. Along with that culture comes literature, critical thinking and organization."

—Jesus Hernandez, College Spark Washington
Board Member and CEO of Family Health Centers

CONCLUSION

Raising expectations and increasing opportunities for all students, particularly those who are underrepresented, is more important than ever. The College Readiness Initiative reinforced that:

- 1 Readiness is the product of a coherent system and impacted by expectations, school culture, peer influences, guidance, course-taking, instruction, academic and social support, college and career awareness, and decision-making supports.
- 2 AVID is a strong example of a personalized, student-centered readiness system that addresses many critical success factors for students, teachers and schools.
- 3 Schools benefit from partners like AVID that have developed instructional support models, and from colleges that welcome visits, support awareness and provide student support.
- 4 Grantmakers that build on research-based models and sustain support for schools over an extended period of time can have a real impact.
- 5 As AVID demonstrated, when expectations are increased and a support system is provided, students will rise to the challenge.

We are hopeful that all communities will work together to build upon the College Readiness Initiative model by establishing strong academic and social supports and creating a college-going culture. Together, these efforts will boost transcript readiness, improve graduation rates, raise college completions and encourage lifelong learning.

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STATE LEVEL LEADERSHIP

[Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) (OSPI): Superintendent Chris Reykdal and Supervisor Barb Ditttrich
[AVID](#): Washington State Director Sue Bergman

HIGH SCHOOLS

[Aberdeen High School](#), Aberdeen Public Schools
[Bridgeport High School](#), Bridgeport Public Schools
[Burlington-Edison High School](#), Burlington-Edison Public Schools
[Cusick Middle/High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Foss High School](#), Tacoma Public Schools
[Grandview High School*](#), Grandview Public Schools
[Heritage High School](#), Evergreen Public Schools
[Inchelium Middle/High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Lincoln High School*](#), Tacoma Public Schools
[Mary Walker High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Mt. Vernon High School](#), Mt. Vernon Public Schools
[Republic Middle/High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Rogers High School*](#), Spokane Public Schools
[Wellpinit Middle/High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools

MIDDLE SCHOOLS

[Bridgeport Middle School](#), Bridgeport Public Schools
[Covington Middle School](#), Evergreen Public Schools
[Curlew Middle School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Cusick Middle/High School](#), Rural Consortium Public Schools
[Frontier Middle School](#), Evergreen Public Schools
[Garry Middle School*](#), Spokane Public Schools

Grandview Middle School*, Grandview Public Schools
Inchelium Middle/High School, Rural Consortium Public Schools
Jason Lee Middle School, Tacoma Public Schools
Laventure Middle School, Mt. Vernon Public Schools
Lucille Umbarger Middle School, Burlington-Edison Public Schools
Miller Junior High School, Aberdeen Public Schools
Mt. Baker Middle School, Mt. Vernon Public Schools
Republic Middle/High School, Rural Consortium Public Schools
Stewart Middle School*, Tacoma Public Schools
Wellpinit Middle/High School, Rural Consortium Public Schools
**CRI AVID schools that also implemented the Career Guidance Washington program*

Other:

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