

Redlands East Valley Hoping to Make AVID Program a National Model

By Kristina Hernandez, Redlands Daily Facts - Posted: 01/27/17, 7:17 PM PST

Redlands East Valley High School AVID student Graciela Velasco, 17, a junior, works on scholarship applications during class Friday. PHOTO BY FRANK PEREZ

REDLANDS >> Redlands East Valley High's implementation of a national program meant to help students achieve their educational goals is gaining notice.

The school is working to make itself a national model for Advancement Via Individual Determination, or AVID, which helps hundreds of REV students each year.

"They are aware that we are a solid program," said Jana Bailey, an AVID coordinator and teacher at REV, "but our ultimate goal is to become a national demonstration school."

According to AVID's website, a national demonstration school serves as an exemplary model of the program. Schools selected for the designation "undergo a rigorous validation process" and must be revalidated every few years "to ensure high levels of implementation, with quality and fidelity to AVID strategies schoolwide."

AVID holds students "accountable to the highest standards" by providing academic and social support through several avenues. The program prepares students for college and other opportunities post-graduation. Currently, REV has 340 students enrolled in the program, and the school is recruiting students who need additional support to reach their goals.

Parent and teacher involvement go hand-in-hand to ensure the program, and the students enrolled, succeed. A student's individual motivation to learn also plays a key role, of course.

"When I first started in education, AVID tried to really involve the kid who had the potential but didn't necessarily have the resources or knowledge to get" to the next level of education success, said Julie Swan, Redlands Unified's director of school improvement and professional development.

Jennifer Murillo, REV's assistant vice president, said the school focuses on finding "middle of the road" students who need a boost to achieve their highest potential.

"We are really looking for that kid who does need those additional reassurances and resources," she said.

AVID programs are available at all RUSD middle and high schools, including Orangewood, the continuation high school.

The success of AVID programs at each school site get a big boost from technology, such as the TelePresence program, which allows the district to broadcast courses from one campus to the other.

REV applied to AVID organizers on the national level to become a site of distinction last year, but fell short. So program organizers began evaluating how to improve metrics required to earn the title.

According to numbers from the 2015-16 school year provided by the district, 72 percent of teachers at REV are AVID trained and 78 percent of 12th grade AVID students have applied for college. REV has reached the benchmark needed for those categories, but fell short in others. For example, only 15 percent of AVID students have taken pre-collegiate exams such as the PSAT, ACT or SAT. A minimum of 70 percent of all students must take the exams, according to metric requirements set by AVID.

Should REV not earn the nod this year, the school plans to continue making improvements until it reaches its goal. District officials hope REV's program continues to be a model for other AVID programs in Redlands.

"We are invested in growing them to that level and beyond," Swan said. "We want all our schools to be national demonstration (sites)."