

ASSESSING COURSE EXPERIENCES: UNDERSTANDING ATTRITION AND
RETENTION WITHIN THE BOSWELL HIGH SCHOOL AVID PROGRAM



Jessica White

Vanderbilt University

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I have always aspired to embody servant leadership, and my experiences learning alongside other incredible leaders at Vanderbilt University over the last three years have given me invaluable examples of what that looks like in action. I am eternally grateful for that.

To my mom, thank you for your unending support. There is no way I could have achieved this without your encouragement along the way. To my dad, thank you for setting the bar so high for me at a young age. You consistently met my questions with more questions instead of answers, fostering a sense of insatiable curiosity in me. To my brother, thank you for looking up to me. Knowing your path has been shaped by mind has given me great inspiration. To my dear friends and family, thank you for reminding me what life is about. It has been easy to get lost in this work, but your gentle understanding (and lack of it, at times) brought me out of my cave and back to earth when I needed it most.

I vividly remember a time not too long ago when I wandered aimlessly in and out of classrooms, uninspired by anything academic and completely unsure of my purpose. It wasn’t until I somehow found myself standing in front of a group of surprisingly terrifying middle school children who depended on me to learn that I began to crave growth and knowledge. Going back to school was foreign and uncomfortable, but I wanted to be better for my students. Over the years, hundreds of students have totally transformed me and have pushed me to persist through this journey. My final note of gratitude is to them. They are my “why”.

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Executive Summary

Organizational Context

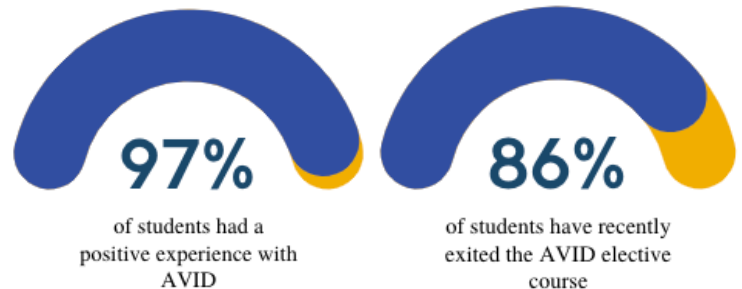
AVID is a national nonprofit organization that takes a multifaceted approach on school campuses to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. The AVID elective course focuses on teaching college readiness skills not traditionally covered in other curricula, including communication skills, organization skills, time management skills, and self-advocacy and self-monitoring skills.

Since the AVID program was established at Boswell High School in 2009, enrollment numbers for the elective course have fluctuated continuously. A survey disseminated for the purpose of this capstone project revealed that 97% of Boswell High School AVID elective students reported having had a positive experience in the class. However, for the Class of 2018 (the most recent year data was available), the attrition rate for the AVID elective course was 86%.

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore the presence of factors that have the potential to contribute to program retention and attrition for students in the Boswell High School AVID elective course.

Problem of Practice

At Boswell High School, a high percentage of students unenroll from the AVID elective course as they advance through high school despite reporting a positive experience with the program.



Conceptual Framework

This project draws on two conceptual frameworks. To understand retention, the All Hands on Deck conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) was used; and to understand attrition, the categories defined in research on high school dropout decisions conducted by Hammond et al. (2007) were used.

According to the All Hands on Deck conceptual framework (Salina, 2013), three elements must be present to retain students in high school programs: academic press, social support, and relational trust. Academic press ensures that students are held to high standards and are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous but attainable coursework; social support certifies that students recognize that stakeholders across the community, like peers, teachers, and administrators, are supportive of their goals; and relational trust ensures that genuine connections are made between students and stakeholders are formed to allow space for trust, confidence, and security to develop.

Hammond et al. (2007) categorize factors that likely impact dropout rates into four domains: individual conflicts, family conflicts, school conflicts, and community conflicts. These four domains served as a supplemental conceptual framework for understanding unenrollment decisions regarding the Boswell High School AVID elective course.

Guiding Research Questions and Findings

This capstone project explored attrition and retention within the Boswell High School AVID elective course through three research questions. To fully address the research questions, this project utilized a mixed methods study design: Data was gathered via a survey, interviews, and a focus group. After an analysis of the collected data, four findings emerged.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1

Why do students report staying enrolled or unenrolling from the AVID elective course?

Finding #1: Students report staying enrolled in the AVID elective course for two main reasons: 1) for the support they need during the college application process and 2) for the close relationships they have developed within the course. The student who unenrolled in the AVID elective course reported doing so to prioritize other more rigorous classes that better prepare her for college academically.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2

What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?

Finding #2: Students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3

What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?

Finding #3: There are no clear patterns in student responses related to the four domains that have the potential to contribute to program attrition (individual, school, family, and community conflict domains). However, the three most reported conflicts within these domains include 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes.

RESEARCH QUESTION 4

What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?

Finding #4: The AVID Site Coordinator reports challenges with schoolwide adoption of the AVID program as it is intended, which impacts stakeholder perceptions of AVID and results in weak recruitment and disorganized scheduling.

Discussion

The data collected in this project highlighted that most students enrolled in the Boswell High School AVID elective course greatly enjoy their experience. They report feeling like they have a family in AVID. However, a lack of academic press leaves students wanting a more rigorous learning experience. Without a clear and meaningful academic purpose, students report seeing AVID coursework as something “extra” that interferes with other commitments. Additionally, the AVID Site Coordinator reports a lack of schoolwide support for the AVID program, resulting in a breakdown in AVID practices that support course retention. Given that attrition occurs in AVID programs across the country, the findings from this study could be used to re-design AVID coursework for a more fulfilling academic experience at Boswell High School and in similar AVID programs.

Recommendations

Considering the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) and the conclusions drawn from the literature review and the analysis, the following are recommendations intended for the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator to prevent attrition and increase retention within the Boswell High School elective course:

1. Adapt AVID coursework: AVID elective teachers must be responsive to individual student needs to ensure that all students are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous but attainable coursework.
2. Highlight applicability: AVID students must have routine opportunities to recognize how AVID coursework is immediately supportive of their short- and long-term academic and personal goals.
3. Clearly communicate intentions and practices system-wide: To garner buy-in from all AVID stakeholders across the campus, the AVID intentions and practices must be more clearly communicated throughout the organization.



Introduction

AVID is a national nonprofit organization that has worked for over 40 years to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. AVID is currently implemented in 7,500 schools across the United States and impacts more than two million students. AVID utilizes a multifaceted system-level approach to create or enhance a schoolwide college-going and career-ready culture that supports high expectations and high levels of achievement for all students. AVID functions on two primary levels: (1) as a suite of resources, initiatives, and professional development opportunities for entire campuses and (2) as an elective course tailored for underrepresented and underserved populations with a focus on first-generation college students. Students are selected to enroll in the AVID elective course through an application process. These students have a desire to attend college but need support to get there.

This capstone project aims to understand attrition and retention within the Boswell High School AVID elective course. The purpose of this capstone project is to explore the presence of factors that have the potential to contribute to program retention and attrition for students in the Boswell High School AVID elective course. Boswell High School first implemented the AVID program on its campus in 2009 with 69 students. Six years later, at the start of the 2015-2016 school year, the current AVID Site Coordinator was hired at Boswell High School. She remains in this role today. Over the last six years, the AVID Site Coordinator has worked to build the Boswell High School AVID program with a focus on recruiting and retaining AVID students in the AVID elective course, which is a major component of the AVID system-wide approach. For example, to impact recruitment and retention, the Boswell High School Site Coordinator has re-designed the recruitment process, created an exit interview process for students who wish to unenroll from the AVID elective course, and attempted to build relationships with stakeholders across the campus.

However, these strategies have not been implemented effectively; Enrollment numbers for the Boswell High School AVID elective course have continued to fluctuate since its establishment, particularly across grade levels as students matriculate from freshman to senior year.

The attrition rate for the AVID elective class for the Class of 2018 (the most recent year data was available) was 86%. This problem is not unique to the Boswell High School AVID program. Prior research on AVID suggests that attrition is a problem for programs across the country: In an analysis of cohorts of students advancing through high school, Mozingo (2017) found that the attrition rate for AVID students from their freshmen year until their senior year is over 67%. The purpose of this capstone project is to explore how and why both attrition and retention occur within the Boswell High School AVID elective course specifically and to offer recommendations for proactive retention strategies at this site.

Organizational Context

To understand attrition and retention within the Boswell High School AVID program, it is first critical to situate the problem within the larger context, including the broader AVID program and the Boswell High School community.

AVID

AVID Overview

In 1980, high school teacher Mary Catherine Swanson founded the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program when she recognized a need for her disadvantaged students to receive explicit instruction in college readiness skills (AVID, 2020; Swanson, 1989). In the 40 years since its creation, this nonprofit organization has worked to close the opportunity gap by training teachers in transformational AVID teaching strategies and implementing the AVID system in school districts across the country. AVID is currently implemented in 7,500 schools across the United States and impacts more than two million students. The AVID mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society (AVID, 2020).

As it is intended for implementation on secondary campuses, AVID exists at a system-level run by a designated AVID Site Coordinator. AVID has created a handbook that outlines program components and expectations titled the AVID Handbook (2021), and AVID Site Coordinators participate in training conducted each summer across that outlines program implementation. Trainings vary in content and include topics like implementing the AVID program on an entire campus, teaching the AVID elective course, and supporting AVID through a leadership or campus teacher role. Subtopics like attrition, retention, and recruitment are embedded in some of these trainings as well. Participants can choose which session they attend

each year. When a school district adopts the AVID system, the campus offers AVID elective courses specific to each grade level (AVID I for 9th graders, AVID II for 10th graders, AVID III for 11th graders, and AVID IV for 12th graders) while also training teachers to utilize AVID teaching strategies in every classroom. Students must be formally accepted to enroll in the AVID elective course through a flexible application process provided by AVID (Appendix A). Students selected to enroll in the AVID elective course are typically first-generation college students, members of a minority group, and economically disadvantaged (AVID, 2020).

AVID Elective Course

With an emphasis on targeting first-generation students specifically, the AVID elective course works to close gaps that certainly exist: Research has found that first-generation college students needed explicit instruction on college readiness skills and clear guidance on what college is since they typically lack such assistance at home (Byrd & MacDonald, 2005; Tierney & Auerbach, 2005). The AVID elective course focuses on teaching college readiness skills not traditionally covered in other high school curricula, including communication skills, organization skills, time management skills, and self-advocacy and self-monitoring skills.

AVID is clear about the characteristics students who enroll in the AVID elective course should possess: AVID elective students possess academic potential; score Basic or Proficient on state-adopted ELA standards exam; score Upper Basic, Proficient, or Advanced on state-adopted math standards exam; have a 2.0-3.5 GPA; possess college potential with support from the AVID elective. Additionally, AVID elective students meet one or more of the following criteria: First-generation college student; low income; demographically historically underserved in four-year universities; have special circumstances (AVID, 2020). Students are selected to enroll in the AVID elective course through an application process introduced during an annual recruitment process

run by the AVID Site Coordinator. Typically, the program is quite selective if implemented as intended because the criterion for the AVID elective student is quite specific. If selected to enroll in the AVID elective course, students must sign a contract that holds them accountable in fulfilling high expectations like enrolling in a rigorous pre-AP, AP, or dual credit course throughout their time in the elective course; maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or above; refraining from engaging in behavior that results in disciplinary action; and upholding a good standing in attendance. Students can be removed from the AVID elective if they fail to meet the expectations outlined in the AVID student contract.

Much of the AVID elective coursework is intended to supplement what students are doing in other classes immediately. Academic strategies that can be used to support learning across curricula are embedded in the daily work that students do in the AVID elective course. In the 9th, 10th, and 11th grade AVID elective courses, for example, students spend a majority of their class time refining three core AVID strategies that contribute significantly to their course grade: Arranging all school-related materials in a designated binder system intended to keep students organized; structured collaborative study groups called “tutorials” through which students can better understand complex content from core classes; and the focused notetaking process which provides students with a framework to solidify their understanding of lessons. These three core AVID strategies are part of AVID’s learning support structure known as WICOR, which is “a construct for lesson design and delivery as well as teaching and learning methodologies to develop five foundational college and career readiness skills” (AVID Handbook, 2021, p. 10). WICOR is an acronym for the five foundational skills that AVID emphasizes should serve as the foundations of instruction: Writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading.

To ensure AVID elective students receive the full benefits of the AVID program, they are expected to remain in AVID for all four years of high school. Extensive research has shown that more years spent in the AVID elective class results in positive outcomes for students, including an increase in grade point average and standardized test scores (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle, 2008; Guthrie & Guthrie, 2000; Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2013; Watt, Yanez, & Cassio, 2002). Additionally, first-generation, low-income AVID alumni who go to college are four times more likely to graduate than their national peers (AVID, 2020). Students have been surveyed in multiple studies that measure college readiness upon completion of the AVID elective course; studies show that completion of the AVID elective courses does increase college readiness for students (Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, & Siegle, 2008; Huerta, Watt, & Butcher, 2013; Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2011).

AVID Schoolwide System

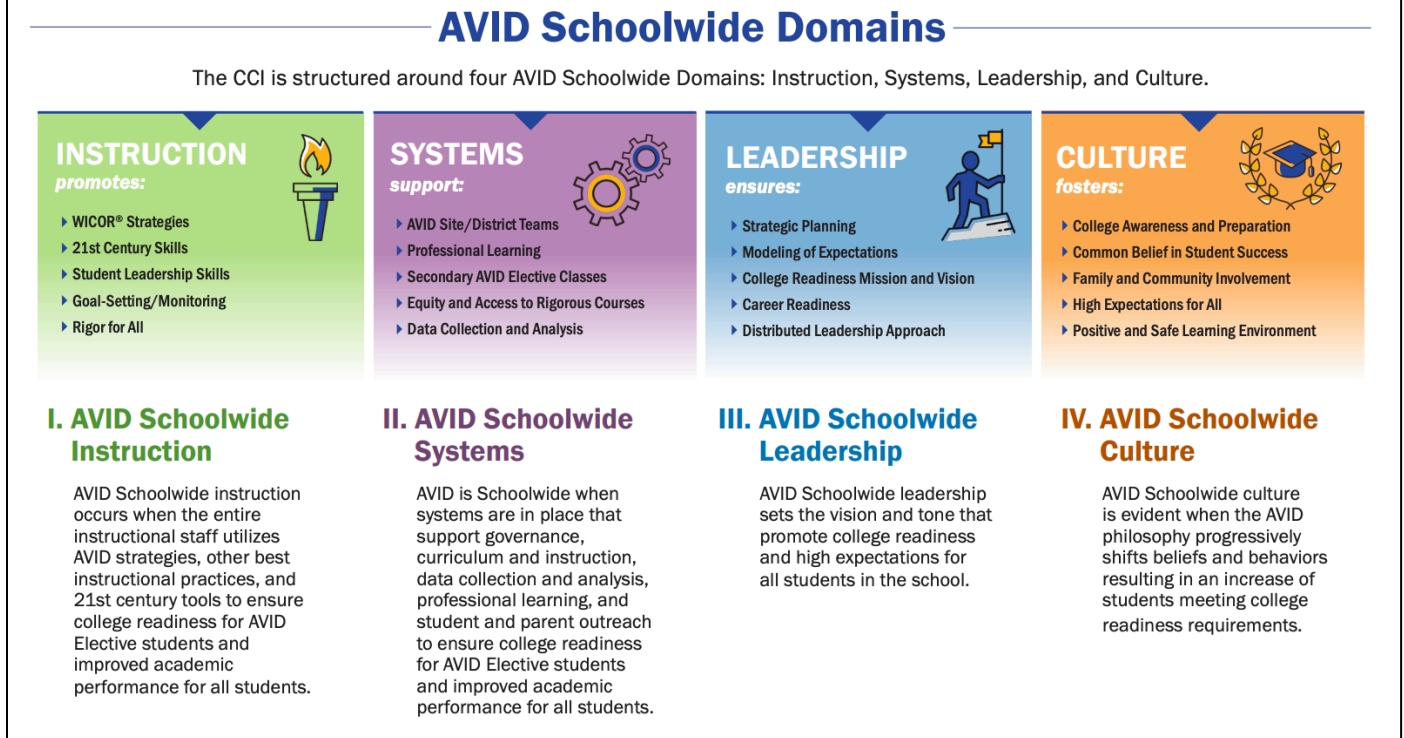
AVID Site Coordinators teach AVID elective courses and facilitate the AVID schoolwide system. While the AVID elective course is a significant component of an AVID program, the program is not designed to function solely as a standalone elective course. Instead, when AVID is implemented, it is meant to be fully adopted across the entire campus to impact college and career readiness for all students. One component of the AVID program is the “Site Team,” which is created to oversee system-wide implementation. Ideally, the Site Team is run by the AVID Site Coordinator and consists of voluntary administrators, counselors, teachers, and other campus stakeholders. While every teacher on campus should receive AVID training as AVID strategies are created to augment learning in any subject area, the Site Team is expected to meet routinely if implemented as intended by the AVID system. The Site Team serves as a core proponent of and model for AVID strategies on the campus. The Site Team is also responsible for participating in

the recruitment process by recommending and interviewing students to enroll in the elective course who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

Measuring Program Success

Each year, AVID Site Teams participate in a collaborative self-assessment of their AVID program to determine the extent to which the campus has successfully implemented the AVID program. Every AVID program strives to be recognized as “AVID Schoolwide,” which AVID defines as: “A strong AVID system that transforms the Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture of a school, ensuring college readiness for all AVID Elective students and improved academic performance for all students based on increased opportunities” (2020-2021 Secondary CCI, 2020, p. 8). To determine whether they have achieved this designation, campuses utilize an instrument developed by AVID called the AVID Secondary Coaching and Certification Instrument, or CCI (Appendix B). The CCI is organized into AVID’s four Schoolwide Domains: Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture (Figure 1). Each domain outlines several criteria that an ideal AVID program should meet within that category to be designated as AVID Schoolwide. The AVID Site Team is expected to collect authentic evidence to document progress within each domain through a collaborative process. For each listed domain, the AVID Site Team uses the collected data to consider the criteria and ultimately rate themselves into one of four tiers: Does Not Meet AVID Implementation Expectations, Meets AVID Implementation Expectations, Emerging AVID Schoolwide, or Sustaining AVID Schoolwide.

Figure 1. Overview of AVID Schoolwide Domains from the CCI.



To earn the title of “AVID Schoolwide,” an AVID program presents data to the AVID District Director to demonstrate that it has “a strong AVID system that transforms the Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture of a school, ensuring college and career readiness for all AVID Elective [...] students and improved academic performance for all students based on increased opportunities” (2020-2021 Secondary CCI, 2020, p. 9). Schools demonstrate eligibility via process metrics and impact metrics. The CCI defines process metrics as “intended to ensure that teachers and staff are appropriately trained in AVID philosophy and strategies, WICOR strategies are routinely used, and leadership decision-making is informed by AVID’s impact, growth, and level of sustainability” and impact metrics as “intended to document schoolwide growth and performance, and to demonstrate an increase in college entrance requirement completion, an increase in rigorous course offerings and enrollment, and the development of a college-going

culture, both philosophically and environmentally” (2020-2021 Secondary CCI, 2020, p. 9). One impact metric in the CCI is related to AVID elective course retention.

Upon submitting the completed CCI to the AVID District Director, programs are sorted into a tiered certification level based on the results: For an “AVID Non-Certified Site,” at least one of the Domains is rated “Does Not Meet AVID Implementation Expectations;” for an “AVID Certified Site,” all Domains are rated “Meets AVID Implementation Expectations” or higher; for an “AVID Emerging Schoolwide Site,” three out of four Domains are rated “Emerging AVID Schoolwide” or higher; and for an “AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction,” all Domains are rated “Emerging AVID Schoolwide” or higher. For the 2018-2019 school year¹, Boswell High School earned a rating of “Meets AVID Implementation Expectations”. Although the AVID program at Boswell High School has never earned the distinction of “AVID Certified Site”, the AVID Site Coordinator is hopeful that the program can accomplish this in the near future.

Boswell High School AVID

Boswell High School is a public school located in Fort Worth, Texas, and exists as part of Eagle Mountain-Saginaw Independent School District. Boswell High School consists of 2,032 students and serves a diverse population: 8.2% African American, 30% Hispanic, 53.4% white, 1.5% American Indian, 3.9% Asian, 0.5% Pacific Islander, and 2.5% two or more races (*Texas Education Agency 2018-2019 School Report Card, Boswell H S, 2019*).

Boswell High School first implemented the AVID program on its campus in 2009 with 69 students. For the 2018-2019 school year, 105 students were enrolled in the AVID program at Boswell High School (*2018-2019 Secondary Data for Boswell High School, n.d.*). A demographic

¹ For Boswell High School and its AVID program, all data gathered and reported for contextual purposes is from the 2018-2019 school year due to inhibited data collection during the pandemic that closed Texas schools beginning in March of 2020.

breakdown shows 47% of AVID students were Hispanic, 16% were African American, 26% were white, 7% were Asian, 1% were American Indian, and 4% were categorized as other. Of those students, 55 were 9th graders, 26 were 10th graders, 16 were 11th graders, and 8 were 12th graders and only 32% of students had been enrolled in the program for at least three years. Figure 2 and Figure 3 below provide more context and demonstrate the trends in enrollment by AVID course level across the last five years. Each year, the AVID IV course has had significantly fewer students enrolled than any other course level, and enrollment in AVID IV has always been less than 11% of program enrollment. In the most recent school year, for example, of the 105 students enrolled in the AVID elective course, 52% were 9th graders, and less than 8% were 12th graders. The attrition rate for the AVID elective class for the Class of 2018 (the most recent year this data was available) was 86%.

Figure 2. Number of students enrolled in AVID by course over the last five school years.

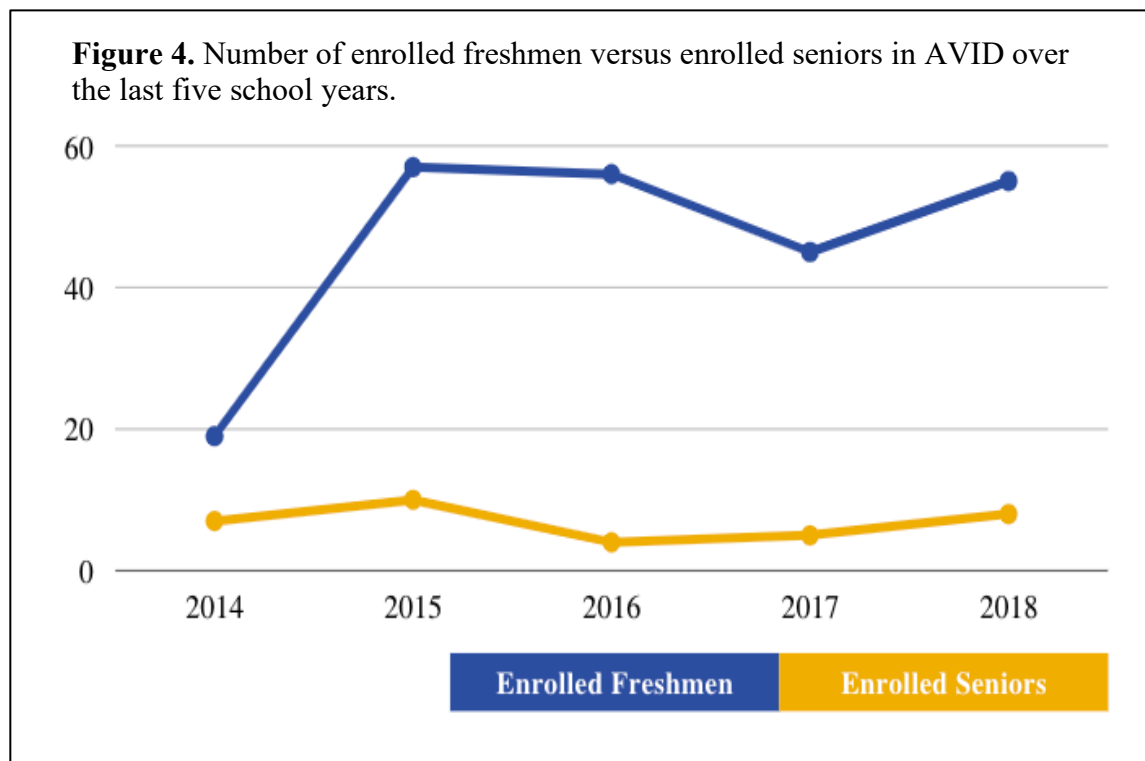
School Year	# of students enrolled		# of students enrolled by course			
	At BHS	In AVID Program	AVID I	AVID II	AVID III	AVID IV
2018-2019	2,034	105	55	26	16	8
2017-2018	1,898	90	45	20	20	5
2016-2017	1,815	81	56	15	6	4
2015-2016	1,692	118	57	30	21	10
2014-2015	1,610	69	19	25	18	7

Figure 3. Percent of students enrolled in AVID by course over the last five school years.

School Year	# of students enrolled		% of students enrolled by course			
	At BHS	In AVID Program	AVID I	AVID II	AVID III	AVID IV
2018-2019	2,034	105	52.38%	24.76%	15.24%	7.62%
2017-2018	1,898	90	50%	22.22%	22.22%	5.55%
2016-2017	1,815	81	69.14%	18.52%	7.41%	4.94%
2015-2016	1,692	118	48.31%	25.42%	17.80%	8.47%
2014-2015	1,610	69	27.54%	36.23%	26.09%	10.14%

Problem of Practice

The attrition that is occurring is concerning to the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator. As such, this capstone project aims to explore attrition and retention within the AVID elective course at this site specifically. At Boswell High School, AVID students choose to unenroll from the AVID elective course as they advance from freshman year to senior year. The number of students enrolled in the AVID elective course during their freshman year (the AVID I elective course) is much higher than the number of students enrolled in AVID during their senior year (the AVID IV elective course). Figure 4 provides a visualization of the disproportionate enrollment numbers for AVID I versus AVID IV over the last five school years.



For a clear snapshot of the severity of this issue, consider the enrollment numbers for the Class of 2018 (the most recent year data is available). When the Class of 2018 began their freshman year in 2014, there were 57 students enrolled in the AVID elective class for freshmen. When the

Class of 2018 began their senior year, there were 8 students enrolled in the AVID elective class for seniors. This means that the attrition rate for the AVID elective course at Boswell High School with the Class of 2018 was 86%.

This attrition rate may indicate that students are not getting value out of the AVID elective course. The Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator wanted to better understand potential causes for course unenrollment in order to make program improvements. While limited literature has suggested that students may unenroll from AVID for a number of reasons mostly related to weak recruitment practices, the AVID Site Coordinator was interested in a study that specifically explored the context at Boswell High School. The purpose of this capstone project is to explore how and why both attrition and retention occur within the Boswell High School AVID elective course specifically and to offer recommendations for proactive retention strategies at this site. In studying the trends and gaps that exist in the Boswell High School AVID program, the program can develop targeted intervention strategies to prevent students from exiting the program. Retaining students from year to year would allow the Boswell High School AVID program to support more students in their college readiness and ultimately work toward fulfilling the AVID mission.

Literature Review

To understand attrition and retention related to AVID, a literature review was conducted within two areas of research: AVID-specific research and high school and program dropout research. The literature in these areas highlights the complicated nature of this problem of practice. In the literature, many factors including misidentification of enrollees, individual characteristics, demographic data, and course features are found to have a major influence on student decisions to unenroll from high school programs. Two major themes emerge in the literature that provide guidance in recruiting the best candidates for the AVID elective course and retaining them from year to year. These include implementing AVID as intended, crafting purposeful recruitment practices to better target enrollees, and designing meaningful programs for students.

AVID-Specific Research

Program Implementation

Some studies have been conducted on the impact of AVID when the program is implemented as intended. An examination of the characteristics of successful AVID programs that experience less attrition uncovered that in implementing the program on their campus, the AVID Site Coordinator tends to follow the intended AVID design very closely. Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) explored the implementation and impact of eight effective AVID high school sites across California through site visits. These sites were selected based on existing records of consistent high performance by AVID students (such as academic achievement, college acceptance, and attendance rates) and at the recommendations of their AVID Regional Director. In this mixed-methods study, researchers interviewed AVID stakeholders, observed AVID elective and campus-wide classes, and examined program and student documents. This study found that the most effective AVID programs follow the intended AVID design as described in the AVID Handbook

and demonstrated in AVID trainings. These programs supported students in rigorous coursework, consistently provided training on AVID strategies for all staff, and ensured the AVID Site Coordinator was highly respected and skilled (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002). Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) did also note that Site Coordinators sometimes made adjustments to the program to meet the needs of their students, but they were minimal. For example, AVID elective seniors might be given a break on Cornell notes for a few weeks, and GPA requirements for enrolling in the elective course could be altered by a few tenths of a point.

Watt, Yanez, and Cossio (2002) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine the impact of the program both schoolwide and for students enrolled in the elective course across 26 schools in seven Texas school districts. In schools that implemented AVID effectively by following AVID guidelines closely, the campus leadership had consciously increased access to rigorous courses for all students. Additionally, the general population of students began to participate more actively in their academic courses as teachers implemented AVID strategies and culture was impacted. Moreover, for AVID elective students, the benefits of course participation were clear: AVID students performed better on state and course assessments than their peers not enrolled in the AVID elective course, and attendance rates for students enrolled in the AVID elective course were consistently higher than attendance rates for the general population.

Additionally, Watt, Huerta, and Alkan (2011) investigated the effectiveness of AVID for students by following 50 AVID alumni who have transitioned to college. This mixed-methods study specifically focused on the results of the AVID program when implemented as intended and how students were impacted long-term by what they learned during their time in the program. The results of this study revealed that AVID graduates exhibited a greater retention rate as well as a greater “potential” graduation rate than their peers (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2011). A breakdown

of college adjustment data showed that 92% of participants returned for a second semester of college, and 80% of participants had an overall GPA of 2.0 or higher at the end of the first full academic year of college (Watt, Huerta, & Alkan, 2011). Additionally, in focus groups, students reported how the skills and resources they accessed in AVID like notetaking, organization strategies, and responsibility contributed to their success in college.

Attrition and Retention

Although research on AVID attrition is minimal and does not explore the specific characteristics of students who exit the AVID elective course in-depth, some relevant studies do exist. Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, and Alkan (2008) identified multiple factors that influence AVID attrition rates. Through a mixed-methods collective case study approach with four California schools and four Texas schools, researchers compared AVID programs that were successful (with AVID elective course retention rates from 71% to 65%) to those that were unsuccessful (with AVID elective course retention rates from 21% to 22%). The first factor contributing to retention was the personal bond between AVID elective students and the AVID elective teacher. When students felt nurtured within the AVID elective course, they remained enrolled, while those who did not develop these relationships dropped the course. Scheduling conflicts also played a significant role in students' decisions to drop the AVID elective course as they struggled to meet graduation requirements. Notably, Watt et al. (2008) reported that "Too often students reported scheduling conflicts that could have been avoided with careful construction of the school's master schedule. Structures were in place at three of the schools that were both inhibiting to the students as well as unsupportive of the AVID program" (Watt et al., 2008, p. 33). Another factor contributing to attrition in this study was lack of commitment to the class: "For the most part, students drop AVID because of a lack of individual determination. If the AVID student

believes that success is possible, the student continues to participate. If the student believes that success is not possible, the student eventually drops out” (Watt et al., 2008, p. 35). The remaining factors influencing attrition included boredom with coursework, failure to recognize the benefits of the program, and peer pressure.

One main factor identified in the literature that impacts retention proactively is the student recruitment and selection process. In the study conducted by Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) highlighted above, at sites with high performing AVID programs, AVID Site Coordinators prioritize recruitment of AVID elective students by ensuring that students who are admitted to the course will benefit from it: “Despite the temptation to admit students outside the specified ‘middle’ range, and some pressure from administrators to select lower-performing students, the AVID programs religiously adhere to the specific guidelines, because they have found – through trial and error – that they work” (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002, p. 5). Through this trial-and-error process, these AVID Site Coordinators have found that not following the intended AVID recruitment guidelines leads to attrition, as “students above the range will soon decide they don’t need the extra work and support that AVID provides, and students below the range will find the work and requirements too demanding” (Guthrie & Guthrie, 2002, p. 5).

High School and Program Dropout Research

There is research on high school and program dropouts that is relevant to this project. Much research has been conducted on the individual characteristics and demographic data that impact the likelihood of a student dropping out of high school programs, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status (Bowers, Sprott, & Taff, 2013; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Severiens & Ten Dam, 2012; Stoessel, Ihme, Barbarino, Fisseler, & Stürmer, 2015). Via a broader perspective resulting from a meta-analysis of 44 studies on dropout factors, Hammond, Linton, Smink, and

Drew (2007) argue that no single risk factor can accurately identify students at risk of dropping out of high school; they instead identify dropping out as a process that takes place over time and is influenced by many different factors. Hammond et al. (2007) name these factors *conflicts*. Hammond et al. (2007) categorize the many conflicts that likely impact dropout rates into four domains: Individual, family, school, and community. Each domain highlights several conflicts that put students at risk of dropping out of high school. The individual domain includes conflicts with student background and characteristics such as race/ethnicity, gender, and cognitive ability; non-school responsibilities; attitudes and behaviors; school performance; and engagement. The family domain includes conflicts regarding socioeconomic status; household stress; family dynamics; and family attitudes, values, and beliefs about education. The school domain includes conflicts with school structure, resources, and environment; student body characteristics and performance; academic policies and practices; and discipline policies and practices. The community domain includes conflicts like location and community type, demographic characteristics, and environment.

Throughout the literature, individual characteristics are emphasized as factors that can result in student decisions to drop out of high school and high school programs. One individual characteristic that is particularly relevant to this project is disinterest or boredom related to coursework. In a mixed-methods study with 14 students, Hansen and Toso (2007) found that students often drop out of programs because they are bored with the assigned work or lack personal or academic support: “For them, school was low-level, unchallenging, and designed for others” (Hansen & Toso, 2007, p. 39). When students are motivated to engage inappropriately rigorous coursework, they are less likely to drop out. To retain students, Hansen and Toso (2007) suggest

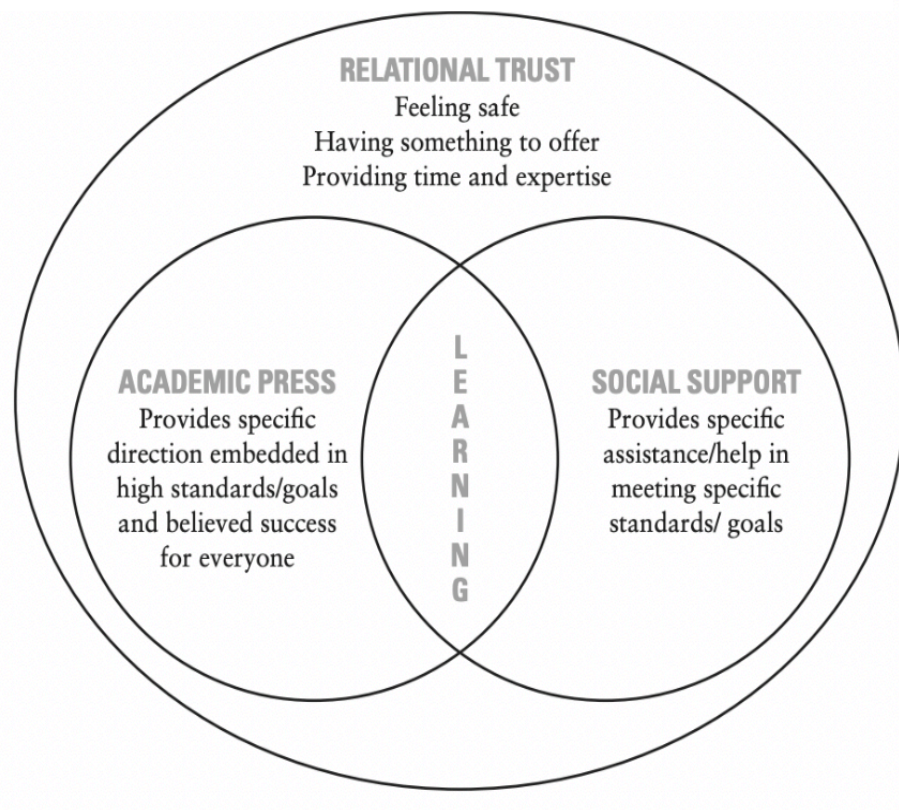
ensuring students feel appropriately challenged in their coursework and building relationships that offer support throughout students' academic experience.

Conceptual Framework

This project draws on two conceptual frameworks. To understand retention, the All Hands on Deck conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) was used; and to understand attrition, the categories defined in research on high school dropout decisions conducted by Hammond et al. (2007) were used. Hammond et al. (2007) categorize factors that likely impact dropout rates into four domains: individual conflicts, family conflicts, school conflicts, and community conflicts. These four domains served as a supplemental conceptual framework for understanding unenrollment decisions regarding the Boswell High School AVID elective course.

Through the literature review, it was evident that some factors that may contribute to retaining students in a high school program include challenging students academically and providing them with support through relational capacity

Figure 5. The All Hands on Deck conceptual framework (Salina, 2013).



(Hansen & Toso, 2007). These ideas are addressed by the All Hands on Deck (AHOD) conceptual framework (Salina, 2013), created in response to the role of the school counselor outlined by the

American School Counselor Association (ASCA) in 2012. AHOD is a conceptual framework of school elements necessary for students to learn (Figure 5). It was developed to guide school counselors as they work to “improve graduation rates by monitoring and supporting students continuously through the application of academic press and social support in an atmosphere of relational trust” (Salina, 2013, p. 66).

According to the AHOD conceptual framework, three elements must be present to increase learning and retain students: academic press, social support, and relational trust (Salina, Girtz, Eppinga, Martinez, Blumer Kilian, Lozano, Martinez, Crowe, De La Barrera, Madrigal Mendez, & Shines, 2013). Academic press ensures that students are held to high standards and are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous but attainable coursework; social support certifies that students recognize that stakeholders across the community, like peers, teachers, and administrators, are supportive of their goals; and relational trust ensures that genuine connections are made between students and stakeholders are formed to allow space for trust, confidence, and security to develop. In a case study, Salina et al. (2013) found that when schools systematically implemented the AHOD conceptual framework with these three elements in place, student academic success increased, and the high school dropout rate dramatically decreased. The Boswell High School AVID program similarly intends to increase academic success and decrease course unenrollment rates for AVID elective students, and the AHOD conceptual framework provided a lens through which to determine gaps in the current retention practices in place on this campus via the data collection process. Therefore, the domains described in the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) in addition to the domains described by Hammond et al. (2007) served as a guide in understanding the experiences students are having within the Boswell High School elective

course and how these experiences impact decisions about whether or not to continue enrollment in the course.

Project Questions

This study seeks to explore attrition and retention within the Boswell High School AVID program through four research questions:

1. Why do students report staying enrolled or unenrolling from the AVID elective course?
2. What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?
3. What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?
4. What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?

As it is intended to operate, AVID exists within a synergistic system-wide approach centered around two symbiotic interdependent levels: First at the elective level through which gaps are closed for targeted college-bound students and at the program level through which AVID strategies impact student learning across the campus. This study will focus on the students enrolled in the AVID elective class while still considering how the system might impact AVID elective students.

Project Design

To fully address the research questions, this project utilized a mixed methods study design: Data was gathered via a survey, interviews with a student who had unenrolled from the AVID elective course and the AVID Site Coordinator, and a focus group of current AVID elective students. The survey data was collected and analyzed first in order to inform revisions to the interview and focus group protocols. An overview of the methods and procedures with participants is provided in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Overview of methods and procedures with participants.

METHOD	PROCEDURE
Survey disseminated to 103 current and former AVID students, aged grades 10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74 total participants (6 former, 68 current AVID students) • Question categories based on domains from Salinas et al. (2013) and Hammond et al. (2007)
Individual interview with student who has dropped the AVID course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 participant, 6 invited • Coded based on domains related to AHOD theory (Salinas et al., 2013): academic press, social support, and relational trust
Individual interviews with Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coded based on domains outlined in AHOD theory (Salinas et al., 2013): academic press, social support, and relational trust
Focus group of students who have remained enrolled in the AVID course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 total participants, 84 invited • Coded based on domains related to AHOD theory (Salinas et al., 2013): academic press, social support, and relational trust

Figure 7 below provides an overview of how the data gathered through each method was used to answer each research question. Data from the student focus group and the interview with the unenrolled student were used to answer research question 1, the survey was used to answer research questions 1 and 2, and the interview with the AVID Site Coordinator was used to answer research question 4.

Figure 7. Overview of how the data gathered through each method was used to answer each research question.

RESEARCH QUESTION	DATA
RQ 1: What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student focus group data • Student interview data
RQ 2: What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 2 of student survey
RQ 3: What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part 3 of student survey
RQ 4: What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVID Site Coordinator interview data

The methods used for this study are consistent with methods used in previous studies on AVID programs. For example, study on retention in AVID programs across California and Texas conducted by Watt, Johnston, Huerta, Mendiola, and Alkan (2008) used a mixed methods collective case study approach that collected data through the use of surveys first and then with supplemental interviews and focus groups. This approach helped researchers “to triangulate data sources and make the study more trustworthy” (Watt et al., 2008, p. 19).

Participants

The survey was disseminated to current and former Boswell High School AVID students (n=103), all currently enrolled at Boswell High School in grades 10-12. The Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator compiled the list of student email addresses, consisting of 84 students currently enrolled in the AVID elective course and 19 students who had dropped the AVID elective

course. 72% of students (74 total participants) responded to the survey: 68 students currently enrolled in the AVID elective students and 6 students who had dropped the AVID elective course.

After reviewing survey results, all 6 survey participants who indicated they had dropped the AVID elective course were invited to participate in an interview through multiple attempts via email, but only 1 participant responded. Additionally, all 84 survey participants who indicated they were still enrolled in the AVID elective course were invited to participate in an interview through multiple attempts via email. 4 participants responded.

Finally, the AVID Site Coordinator provided an overview of the larger organization that AVID is a part of, uncovered underlying barriers and supports in implementing the AVID system, and allowed for insight on the role that campus and district leadership have in ensuring the success of the AVID class.

Data Collection

Survey Design

To collect quantitative data on demographics and the AVID experience, a survey was developed for students (Appendix C). Surveys were administered via a Google Forms link sent to students in a series of email invitations and reminders with informed consent attached over the course of two weeks (Appendix D and E). Gift cards were raffled off to provide an incentive for participation.

The survey was divided into three parts. At the start of the survey, Part 1 included questions on demographics, the background of the student, and the general AVID experience to aid in identifying patterns within student groups. Demographic information collected included gender, ethnicity, language, economic status, and services received by special programs. Additional general information collected included school and program enrollment history, extracurricular

participation, GPA and grade reports, absence reports, discipline records, and levels of parent education. The questions in Part 1 were adapted from the AVID application as provided by AVID in the recruitment guidelines (Appendix A). The intention in adapting these questions from the recruitment guidelines was to assess whether students participating in the survey met the ideal AVID student criterion as outlined by AVID. However, due to a limited number of participants, the sample size was not representative of all students enrolled in the AVID elective course and this type of analysis was not appropriate.

Survey questions in Part 2 were organized into categories based on the three domains as outlined in the AHOD conceptual framework by Salina (2013). As such, Part 2 of the survey was divided into three sub-groups: the first group of questions was intended to gain an understanding of academic press in the AVID elective course; the second group of questions was centered around social support; and the third group of questions was focused on relational trust. An overview of each question in Part 2 organized by the three domains as outlined AHOD conceptual framework is displayed in Figure 8 below. The questions in Part 2 of the survey were adapted from a survey by Salina and Girtz (2019). This survey was designed for schools to assess its proficiency at addressing the domains outlined by the AHOD conceptual framework.

Figure 8. Questions in Part 2 of the survey organized by the three domains as outlined AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013).

#	General Questions
1	I had a positive experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.
2	I have considered exiting the program.
#	Questions Related to Academic Press
3	Being an AVID student means that I have to meet high expectations.
4	The AVID elective course has challenged me in a good way.
5	I could achieve the expectations the AVID elective course had for me.
6	I have been bored with the AVID elective coursework.
7	I enjoy the AVID elective coursework.
8	The AVID elective coursework is useful to me.
9	My AVID teacher believes I can earn good grades.
10	The AVID elective coursework is too hard.
11	My AVID teacher holds me accountable for my schoolwork.
12	AVID motivates me to be a good student.
#	Questions Related to Social Support
13	My AVID teacher supports me academically.
14	My AVID teacher supports me personally.
15	My AVID peers support me academically.
16	My AVID peers support me personally.
17	Other Boswell High School teachers recognize and support AVID students.
18	Boswell High School administrators recognize and support AVID students.
19	Non-AVID students say positive things about AVID.
20	My AVID teacher is there for me when I need help.
21	I get help in my AVID class that I can't get anywhere else.
22	AVID students get to do things that other students don't.
#	Questions Related to Relational Trust
23	I like my AVID teacher.
24	I like my AVID peers.
25	I look forward to going to my AVID class.
26	I feel safe in my AVID class.
27	My parents/family members support my participation in AVID.
28	I trust my AVID teacher.
29	My AVID teacher is always well-prepared.
30	I have fun in AVID.
31	My AVID teacher teaches me useful things.
32	I would recommend AVID to my friends.
33	I fit in the AVID program.
34	AVID is effective for me.

All questions in Parts 1 and 2 of the survey were marked as required for participants to answer, but Part 3 of the survey was only revealed to students who indicated they had unenrolled from the AVID elective course. So, of the 74 total participants who responded to the survey only the 6 students who had dropped the AVID elective course answered Part 3 of the survey.

Survey questions in Part 3 were organized into categories based on the four factors that influence high school dropout decisions as outlined by Hammond et al. (2007). As such, Part 3 of the survey was divided into four sub-groups: Part 3 of the survey asked questions to better understand the individual, family, school, and community conflicts experienced by students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course. An overview of each question in Part 3 organized by the three domains as outlined AHOD conceptual framework is displayed in Figure 9 below. The questions in Part 3 of the survey were developed for this capstone project to align with each domain that has the potential to influence program attrition as described by Hammond et al. (2007).

Figure 9. Questions in Part 3 of the survey organized by the four domains as outlined by Hammond et al. (2007).

#	General Questions
1	I regret exiting the AVID elective course.
2	Exiting AVID was a good decision for me.
3	I had no choice but to exit the AVID elective course.
4	I would like to re-enroll in the AVID elective course.
5	I was asked to exit AVID because I violated an expectation.
#	Questions Related to Individual Conflicts
6	I had conflicts with my AVID teacher.
7	I had conflicts with my AVID peers.
8	AVID got in the way of other parts of my life.
9	I have a lot of friends in AVID.
10	I want to go to college.
11	AVID helped me succeed in other classes.
12	AVID required too much extra work.
13	I found it hard to concentrate in AVID.
14	I didn't use AVID strategies in my other classes.
15	I have other people who can help me get to college.
16	I was proud to be an AVID student.
17	AVID was exactly what I thought it was going to be.
18	AVID interferes with my responsibilities (like work or extracurriculars).
#	Questions Related to Family Conflicts
19	My family supported me in AVID.
20	My family liked my AVID teacher.
21	My family has resources to help me get into college.
22	My family is supportive of my college dreams.
23	I have responsibilities at home that take up a lot of time.
#	Questions Related to School Conflicts
24	I participate in another activity or class at school that conflicts with AVID.
25	Another extracurricular activity is more important to me than AVID.
26	My other teachers encouraged me to be a part of AVID.
27	AVID students are respected at Boswell High School.
28	My counselor helped me fit AVID in my schedule.
29	AVID was a priority for me when signing up for classes.
30	There are other programs at school that are more useful to me than AVID.
#	Questions Related to Community Conflicts
23	A lot of people in our community go to college.
24	There are resources in our community to help me pay for college.
25	It's necessary to go to college to work in our community.
26	People who go to college are respected in our community.

Interview Design

To supplement the quantitative data gathered through surveys with more detailed input, interviews were conducted with a student who had unenrolled from the AVID elective course and the AVID Site Coordinator. Each interview was conducted on Zoom, and they were recorded using Zoom software. First, the interview was conducted with a student who had dropped the AVID elective course. Interviewing this student allowed for a deeper understanding of the AVID student experience and the reasoning behind the student's decision based on survey responses. Questions for interviews were developed in an interview guide (Appendix F). Interview question development for this student was guided by the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) and the domains contributing to unenrollment decisions outlined by Hammond et al. (2007)

Additionally, to provide a broader perspective and deeper context on the Boswell High School AVID program, two extensive interviews were conducted with the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator. The interviews were completed in two parts over the course of two consecutive days due to time constraints; the first interview ran over its scheduled time. Questions for the AVID Site Coordinator were developed in an interview guide (Appendix G). Interview question development for the AVID Site Coordinator was guided by the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) and the domains contributing to unenrollment decisions outlined by Hammond et al. (2007). Additionally, she offered detailed information on the implementation of AVID elective courses, AVID system-wide, and the recruitment and retention practices for Boswell High School AVID elective students.

Focus Group Design

Lastly, to further understand the AVID elective experience and to learn more about why students choose to remain in the AVID elective course based on survey responses, a focus group

of current AVID elective students was held with 4 total participants. The focus group was conducted on Zoom, and it was recorded using Zoom software. Questions for the focus group were developed in an interview guide (Appendix F). Focus group question development was guided by the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) as well as initial results from the survey analysis.

Data Analysis

Survey Data

Immediately after the survey was closed and prior to beginning the qualitative analysis, the survey was analyzed. This sequential order of data analysis was implemented with the intention of utilizing quantitative data to inform qualitative questioning.

First, demographic data and general background information were analyzed in Part 1 of the survey. The intention for this step of the analysis was to allow for a better understanding of the specific population participating in the survey. Additionally, this created an opportunity to search for trends and patterns contributing to attrition and retention. However, no trends or patterns were evident during this step of the analysis, primarily because of insufficient data on attrition; only 6 survey participants had unenrolled from the AVID elective class. These 6 participants were all female. 3 participants were Caucasian/white, 2 were Latino or Hispanic, and 1 was African American/black. 1 participant spoke Spanish as her first language; 1 was economically disadvantaged; and 1 received special education services. Their GPA varied from 2.5 to 4.0, and their parents had varying levels of education. Given this small sample size, it was inappropriate to draw conclusions about whether demographic data and general background information can contribute to the decision to unenroll from the AVID elective class.

Next, survey responses from questions administered to all survey participants in Part 2 of the survey were sorted into domains adapted from the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina,

2013). This allowed for an assessment of to what extent the Boswell High School AVID elective students experienced academic press, social support, and relational trust within the AVID elective course. Based on the AHOD conceptual framework, the survey questions in Part 2 sought

Section 2: Boswell High School AVID Program Experience

For each of the following questions, please use the scale provided for your response; however if you do not know to what extent you agree with the item, please use the option "Do not know." For each question, consider all experience with the Boswell High School AVID elective course prior to this school year.

Part I: General Experience *

	Do not know	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I had a positive experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have considered exiting the program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 10. Example of survey question with Likert scale.

to understand how factors within each of these domains influenced attrition and retention within the AVID elective class. Survey question responses for these questions were distributed on a Likert scale with possible answers being strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree or do not know, disagree, strongly disagree, or do not know. An example of this question type is displayed in Figure 10.

The responses to Part 2 of the survey provided preliminary context on the student perspective of the AVID elective class and helped provide a more specific direction for the interview and focus group processes. For example, the survey revealed that 91.9% of AVID elective students liked their AVID teacher. This suggested that relational trust related to the AVID teacher was likely not influencing student decisions to unenroll from the AVID program and

eliminated any need to probe further regarding the teacher during the interview or focus group processes.

Additionally, of the 74 AVID elective students who responded to the survey, only 7 students reported they had not been bored with the AVID coursework and only 2 students believed the AVID coursework was hard. These responses drew attention to the academic press domain as it appeared students were not feeling inspired or challenged by the curriculum, which is important as described by Salina (2013) through the AHOD conceptual framework. This led to a deeper probing regarding coursework during the interview and focus group processes to better understand how or whether students found meaning in the AVID elective course.

There was no clear majority on whether the AVID coursework was useful or enjoyable or whether they could get help in the AVID elective class that they could not get anywhere else; many participants selected a neutral option on the Likert scale for these questions. Nevertheless, 90.1% of participants felt that their AVID teacher supported them academically and 85.1% of participants felt that their AVID teacher was there for them when they needed help. This suggested that the interviews and focus groups could provide a deeper explanation regarding why so many students were satisfied with their experience in the AVID elective course yet had considered unenrolling at some point.

Data collected in Part 2 of the survey was also compiled in a table that allowed for a comparison of the mean responses from students who have stayed in the AVID elective course to the responses from students who decided to unenroll from the course (Figure 10). For the students who continued enrollment in the AVID elective course, $n=68$ and for the students who decided to unenroll from the AVID elective course, $n=6$. To calculate the mean responses for each group of students, each possible response on the Likert scale was assigned a numerical value: strongly

disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neither agree or disagree and do not know = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5. Figure 11 below displays the mean responses for each question in Part 2 of the survey. This table gave initial overview of how students who had unenrolled from the course were experiencing academic press, social support, and relational trust in the AVID elective class compared to those who had continued enrollment in the class.

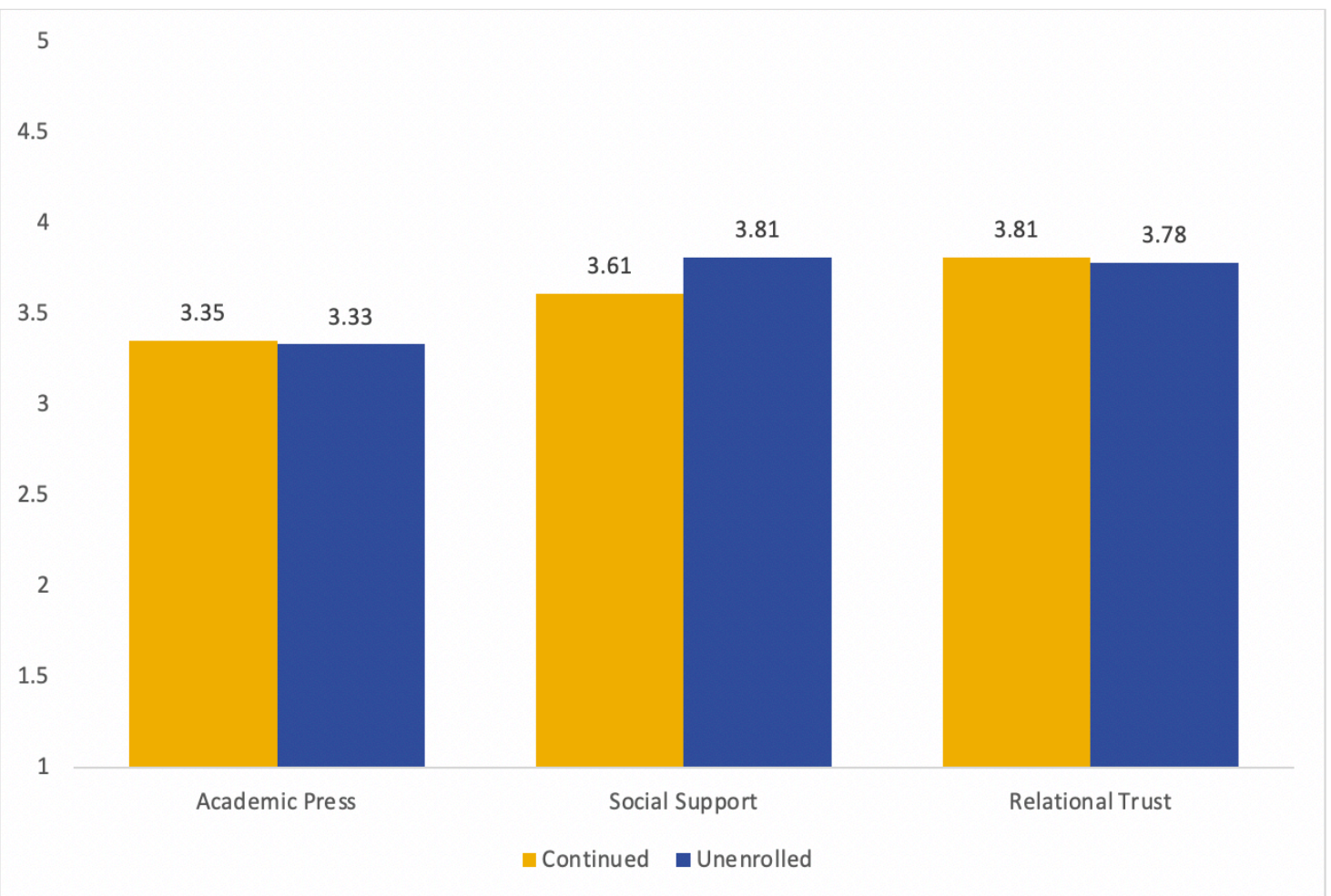
From this table, some small differences in experiences were evident between each group of students for individual questions, especially within the academic press domain. For example, there was a notable difference between responses to question 7 asking whether students enjoyed AVID coursework. The continuing students' mean answer to that question was 3.15 indicating that this group skewed toward agreeing that the coursework was enjoyable, while the unenrolled students reported that they enjoyed AVID coursework much less at a mean of 2.83 indicating that this group skewed toward disagreeing that the coursework was enjoyable.

Figure 11. Comparison of the mean responses to each question in Part 2 of the survey between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the “Continued” column, n=68 “Unenrolled” column, n=6.

Part 1: General Experience		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
1	I had a positive experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.	3.94	4.33
2	I have considered exiting the program.	3.37	3.50
Part 2: Academic Press		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
3	Being an AVID student means that I have to meet high expectations.	3.66	4.00
4	The AVID elective course has challenged me in a good way.	3.63	3.33
5	I could achieve the expectations the AVID elective course had for me.	4.13	4.17
6	I have been bored with the AVID elective coursework.	3.18	3.67
7	I enjoy the AVID elective coursework.	3.15	2.83
8	The AVID elective coursework is useful to me.	3.25	3.83
9	My AVID teacher believes I can earn good grades.	4.22	4.33
10	The AVID elective coursework is too hard.	1.75	2.33
11	My AVID teacher holds me accountable for my schoolwork.	3.99	3.67
12	AVID motivates me to be a good student.	3.94	3.50
Part 3: Social Support		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
13	My AVID teacher supports me academically.	4.18	4.50
14	My AVID teacher supports me personally.	3.93	4.33
15	My AVID peers support me academically.	3.48	3.50
16	My AVID peers support me personally.	3.22	3.50
17	Other Boswell High School teachers recognize and support AVID students.	2.99	3.33
18	Boswell High School administrators recognize and support AVID students.	3.22	3.17
19	Non-AVID students say positive things about AVID.	2.06	3.00
20	My AVID teacher is there for me when I need help.	3.96	4.33
21	I get help in my AVID class that I can't get anywhere else.	3.46	3.33
22	AVID students get to do things that other students don't.	3.03	3.17
Part 4: Relational Trust		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
23	I like my AVID teacher.	4.39	4.50
24	I like my AVID peers.	3.96	3.50
25	I look forward to going to my AVID class.	3.77	3.33
26	I feel safe in my AVID class.	4.01	4.16
27	My parents/family members support my participation in AVID.	3.75	4.00
28	I trust my AVID teacher.	4.03	4.17
29	My AVID teacher is always well-prepared.	3.97	4.17
30	I have fun in AVID.	3.73	3.50
31	My AVID teacher teaches me useful things.	3.96	3.67
32	I would recommend AVID to my friends.	3.37	4.00
33	I fit in the AVID program.	3.33	3.17
34	AVID is effective for me.	3.48	3.17

To assess how continuing and unenrolled students experience each domain of the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) overall, the means for each collapsed domain were compared across the two groups of students as well (Figure 12). For the purpose of this visual, questions 17, 18, and 19 regarding social support were eliminated from the calculation. The rationale behind this decision was that these three questions ask about support of the AVID program outside of the AVID elective course. Specifically, these questions ask whether Boswell High School teachers, campus administrators, and non-AVID teachers support AVID. Therefore, this visual is only relevant to the students' experiences within the AVID elective course.

Figure 12. Comparison of the overall mean responses for each domain within Part 2 of the survey between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the “Continued” group, n=68 “Unenrolled” group, n=6.



All questions were re-aligned to have a positive connotation so that the means indicated a positive experience within each domain. For example, as question 6 is written, it has a negative connotation: I have been bored with the AVID elective coursework. As a result, a response of strongly agree given a value of 4 would indicate that the participant had been bored with AVID coursework and therefore had a negative experience. Therefore, the mean response for any questions that had a negative connotation as written were given an inverse value.

Through this visualization, it could be confirmed that of the three domains, both continued and unenrolled students reported experiencing academic press the least while social support and relational trust were experienced more. Overall, the mean response for questions about academic press was 3.35 for continuing students and 3.33 for unenrolled students; the mean response for questions about social support was 3.61 for continuing students and 3.81 for unenrolled students; and the mean response for questions about relational trust was 3.81 for continuing students and 3.78 for unenrolled students.

Lastly, the remaining survey responses from questions administered only to those who had indicated they had unenrolled from the AVID elective course in Part 3 of the survey were sorted into categories adapted from dropout research by Hammond et al. (2007). The intention was to document student reasons for unenrolling from the AVID elective course by inquiring about individual, family, school, and community conflicts. Again, survey question responses for these questions were distributed on a Likert scale with possible answers being strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree or do not know, disagree, strongly disagree, or do not know as displayed in Figure 9 above.

The responses to Part 3 of the survey provided additional context regarding student decisions to unenroll from the AVID elective class within the domains outlined by Hammond et

al. (2007) and also helped provide a more specific direction for the interview and focus group processes. For example, of the 6 students who had dropped the AVID elective class that responded to the survey, all 6 reported that they did not have any conflicts with their AVID teacher and that they felt proud to be an AVID student. However, only 1 student answered that they regretted unenrolling from the AVID elective class, only 2 students reported that AVID was what they expected it to be, and only 1 student shared that AVID was a priority for them when signing up for classes. These responses highlighted conflicts within the individual conflict and school conflict domains, which drew attention to a need for deeper probing regarding factors within these domains during the interview and focus group processes to better understand student decisions to unenroll from the AVID elective course.

Data collected in Part 3 of the survey was also compiled in a table that allowed for an analysis of the mean responses from students who have decided to unenroll from the course (Figure 11). To calculate the mean responses, each possible response on the Likert scale was assigned a numerical value: strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, neither agree or disagree and do not know = 3, agree = 4, strongly agree = 5. Figure 13 below displays the mean responses for each question in Part 3 of the survey. This table allowed for a clearer breakdown of mean responses to each domain of conflict. Based on the table, it was evident that students were not reporting family and community conflicts. However, this table again confirmed conflicts within the individual and school domains. For example, the lowest recorded mean for a question with a negative connotation on the table was in response to question 27 about whether AVID students were respected at Boswell High School. Students responded to this question with a mean of 1.33, indicating that students were not respected at Boswell High School. The lowest recorded mean for a question with a positive connotation on the table was in response to question 6 about whether students had

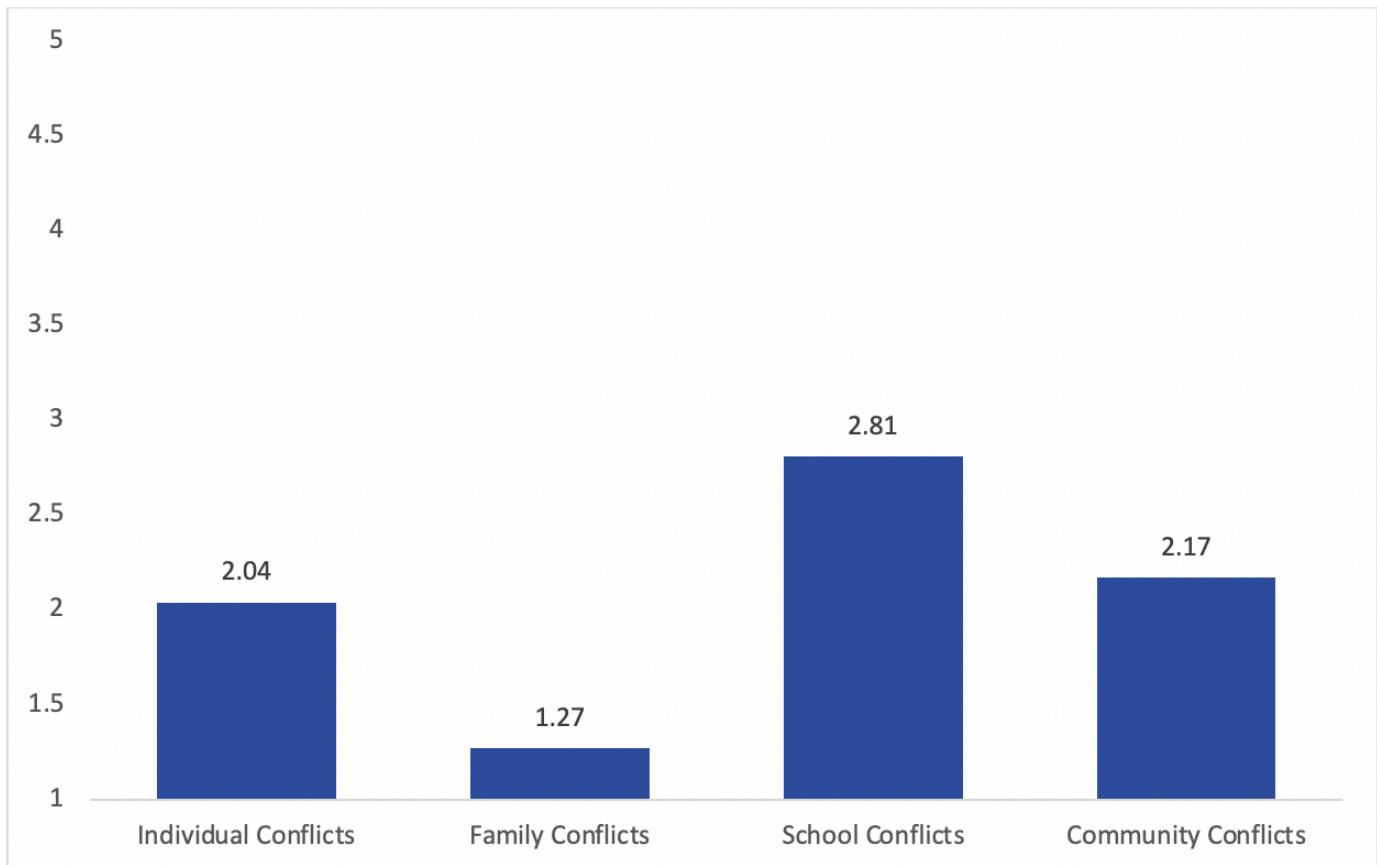
conflicts with the AVID teacher. Students responded to this question with a mean of 1.33, indicated they did not experience conflicts with the AVID teacher.

Figure 13. Mean responses to each question in Part 3 of the survey regarding conflicts experienced by students who have decided to unenroll from the course. For this section of the survey, n=6.

Part 1: General Experience		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
1	I regret exiting the AVID elective course.	2.50
2	Exiting AVID was a good decision for me.	2.67
3	I had no choice but to exit the AVID elective course.	3.17
4	I would like to re-enroll in the AVID elective course.	2.83
5	I was asked to exit AVID because I violated an expectation.	1.50
Part 2: Individual Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
6	I had conflicts with my AVID teacher.	1.33
7	I had conflicts with my AVID peers.	1.67
8	AVID got in the way of other parts of my life.	3.17
9	I have a lot of friends in AVID.	3.67
10	I want to go to college.	4.17
11	AVID helped me succeed in other classes.	4.50
12	AVID required too much extra work.	3.67
13	I found it hard to concentrate in AVID.	2.17
14	I didn't use AVID strategies in my other classes.	2.50
15	I have other people who can help me get to college.	3.17
16	I was proud to be an AVID student.	4.33
17	AVID was exactly what I thought it was going to be.	3.00
18	AVID interferes with my responsibilities (like work or extracurriculars).	3.50
Part 3: Family Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
19	My family supported me in AVID.	4.33
20	My family liked my AVID teacher.	4.17
21	My family has resources to help me get into college.	4.00
22	My family is supportive of my college dreams.	4.50
23	I have responsibilities at home that take up a lot of time.	3.33
Part 4: School Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
24	I participate in another activity or class at school that conflicts with AVID.	3.50
25	Another extracurricular activity is more important to me than AVID.	3.17
26	My other teachers encouraged me to be a part of AVID.	2.67
27	AVID students are respected at Boswell High School.	1.33
28	My counselor helped me fit AVID in my schedule.	3.33
29	AVID was a priority for me when signing up for classes.	2.50
30	There are other programs at school that are more useful to me than AVID.	2.83
Part 5: Community Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
23	A lot of people in our community go to college.	3.17
24	There are resources in our community to help me pay for college.	3.17
25	It's necessary to go to college to work in our community.	2.17
26	People who go to college are respected in our community.	3.50

To assess how unenrolled students experience each domain outlined by Hammond et al. (2007) overall, the means for each collapsed domain were compared as well (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Comparison of the overall mean responses for each domain within Part 2 of the survey between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the responses displayed in this table, n=6.



All questions were re-aligned to have a negative connotation so that the means indicated a high number of conflicts within each domain. For example, as question 11 is written, it has a positive connotation: AVID helped me succeed in other classes. As a result, a response of strongly agree given a value of 4 would indicate that AVID helped the participant succeed AVID and therefore did not experience this as a conflict. To address this, the mean response for any questions that had a positive connotation as written were given an inverse value.

Through this visualization, it could be confirmed that of the four domains, unenrolled students reported experiencing the most conflicts within the school conflicts domain. Overall, the mean response for questions in the individual conflict domain was 2.04; the mean response for questions in the family conflict domain was 1.27; the mean response for questions in the individual school domain was 2.81; and the mean response for questions in the community conflict domain was 2.17.

Interview and Focus Group Data

The data that was analyzed using qualitative methods included responses from semi-structured interviews with a student who had dropped the AVID elective course and the AVID Site Coordinator and responses from a focus group of students who were still enrolled in the AVID elective course. The purpose of this research method was to provide more context on survey results and aid in making more specific recommendations to aid in increasing retention for the AVID elective class.

At the conclusion of each session, an analysis was conducted utilizing a ten-step process adapted from Ose (2016, p. 3):

1. Collect the data.
2. Transcribe the audio files.
3. Transfer the text from Word to Excel.
4. Prepare the Excel document for coding.
5. Code in Excel.
6. Prepare the coded interviews for sorting.
7. Sort the data.
8. Transfer quotes and references from Excel to Word.

9. Sort the text into a logical structure based on the coding.
10. Analyze the data.

Coding for the interviews and focus groups was based on the domains outlined in AHOD theory (Salina, 2013): Responses were sorted into domains of academic press, social support, and relational trust. Whenever a participant spoke about the AVID curriculum or coursework, the response was coded within the academic press domain; whenever a participant reflected on the ways in which they did or did not feel supported or the ways in which they offered support to others in the AVID elective class, the response was coded within the social support domain; and whenever a participant talked about relationships within the AVID elective class, the response was coded within the relational trust domain.

Additionally, responses from the interview with the student who had dropped the AVID elective course were coded into the four categories of conflict as described by Hammond et al. (2007). Whenever the participant spoke about personal difficulties with the AVID elective class or coursework specifically, the response was coded within the individual conflict domain; whenever the participant shared struggles related to family support, the response was coded within the family conflict domain; whenever a participant talked about other school-related priorities or scheduling concerns, the response was coded within the school conflict domain; and whenever a participant spoke of community resources, views on college, and career prospects, the response was coded within the community conflict domain.

In analyzing the data, analytic memos were written to capture the preliminary findings related to the research questions. These findings were then triangulated with the survey data.

Findings

The results gathered from the survey, interviews, and the focus group resulted in four findings related to the four research questions, outlined in Figure 15 below.

Figure 15. Research findings as they are related to project research questions.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1	Why do students report staying enrolled or unenrolling from the AVID elective course?
<p>Finding #1: Students report staying enrolled in the AVID elective course for two main reasons: 1) for the support they need during the college application process and 2) for the close relationships they have developed within the course. The student who unenrolled in the AVID elective course reported doing so to prioritize other more rigorous classes that better prepare her for college academically.</p>	
RESEARCH QUESTION 2	What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?
<p>Finding #2: Students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press.</p>	
RESEARCH QUESTION 3	What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?
<p>Finding #3: There are no clear patterns in student responses related to the four domains that have the potential to contribute to program attrition (individual, school, family, and community conflict domains). However, the three most reported conflicts within these domains include 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes.</p>	
RESEARCH QUESTION 4	What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?
<p>Finding #4: The AVID Site Coordinator reports challenges with schoolwide adoption of the AVID program as it is intended, which impacts stakeholder perceptions of AVID and results in weak recruitment and disorganized scheduling.</p>	

Finding 1

Research Question 1: Why do students report staying enrolled or unenrolling from the AVID elective course?

Finding 1: Students report staying enrolled in the AVID elective course for two main reasons: 1) for the support they need during the college application process and 2) for the close relationships they have developed within the course. The student who unenrolled in the AVID elective course reported doing so to prioritize other more rigorous classes that better prepare her for college academically.

The first research question asked why students made the decision to continue enrollment or unenroll from the AVID elective class. The first major finding from this study was that students report remaining in the AVID elective course due to social support and relational trust and unenrolling due to lack of academic press.

Continuing Enrollment: Focus Group Analysis. The focus group of current AVID elective students who have made the decision to continue enrollment in the AVID elective course was held with 4 total participants. For the purpose of this analysis, Student 1 will be called Alex, student 2 will be called Beth, student 3 will be called Carly, and student 4 will be called David. Interestingly, all 4 students who participated in the focus group had indicated on the survey that they had considered dropping the course at some point. When participants were asked why they chose to stay enrolled in the AVID elective course despite this consideration, each student noted how the support they received in AVID and their relationships within the class contributed to their decision to continue enrollment.

In coding the focus group responses, all 4 participants spoke about social support and relational trust when sharing their positive experiences in the AVID elective course. All 4

participants noted how the social support they received in AVID both personally and academically was important to them and contributed to their decision to continue in the class. Alex noted that AVID explicitly supports students in reaching their goals, most tangibly in their senior year. When asked why she chose to continue her enrollment in the class, she said, “I stayed in AVID because one of my friends did, and it really helped her whenever she was applying for colleges and applying for scholarships.” That promise of support backed by evidence from AVID alumni keeps students enrolled.

The other 3 participants agreed with Alex. Carly added, “I did the same. My brother is a senior this year, and I see how he’s so stressed about applying for college. I figured AVID would help because we already talk about colleges sophomores this year. I figured it would help me a lot more to not be so stressed like my brother.” Beth shared, “I am on the same page as everyone else. I don’t want to pull my hair out senior year.” David explained that “the senior results” were what kept him enrolled in the course. From these focus group responses, it was clear that these students saw a need for support in applying to college their senior year. They understood from their successful classmates that AVID would provide the support they needed, so they stayed for that reason.

As the conversation progressed, Alex shared how relationships she had built in the class also contributed to their decision to stay enrolled. After discussing her frustration with some of the AVID coursework, Alex said, “Some things were cool about [the class], so I didn’t drop out. It’s almost like a little family.” Beth, Carly, and Dave agreed with visible nods.

Unenrollment: Interview Analysis. In an effort to better understand the reasons students choose to unenroll from the AVID elective course, an interview with a student who had dropped the class was conducted. For the purpose of this analysis, this student will be called Anna. In

coding Anna's interview responses, she frequently spoke about social support and relational trust when sharing her positive experiences in the AVID elective course. Throughout the interview, Anna expressed a feeling of fondness regarding her time in AVID, stating her experience "was mostly positive because of the people I had in my class, and [the teacher] made it fun, too." She even remained connected with her former AVID teacher, sharing that, "When I go back to the school and I see [my former AVID teacher], I will go say, 'Hi.'" This suggests again that AVID provides students with two of the three domains outlined in the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013): Students experience ample social support and genuine relational trust.

However, in coding Anna's interview responses about her negative experiences in AVID, she frequently spoke about academic press. Anna also shared that when it came to the coursework itself, she did not have a good experience. "It was boring," she said. Of the coursework, she explained that "tutorials were the worst part." This is concerning, as students participate in tutorials every Tuesday and Thursday, making up almost half of the AVID curriculum. Moreover, Anna reported that she did not get much academic help out of AVID at all. Rather, she said, "The only thing [AVID] really helped me with was my note taking strategy." As a result, Anna explained her decision to unenroll from the AVID elective class in order to prioritize classes that she felt were more helpful in getting her college ready: "I was taking other pre-AP classes, and I didn't want to overload myself." She identified this as is the main reason she unenrolled from the AVID elective course.

The AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) highlights a major contributing factor to program unenrollment decisions: Academic press. The interview with Anna shows that with the absence of rigorous but attainable coursework, students struggle to find the academic value in the AVID elective course. As a result, they are likely to seek out other more meaningful coursework

that can better prepare them for the future they want, even when they generally have a good experience in the class.

Finding 2

Research Question 2: What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?

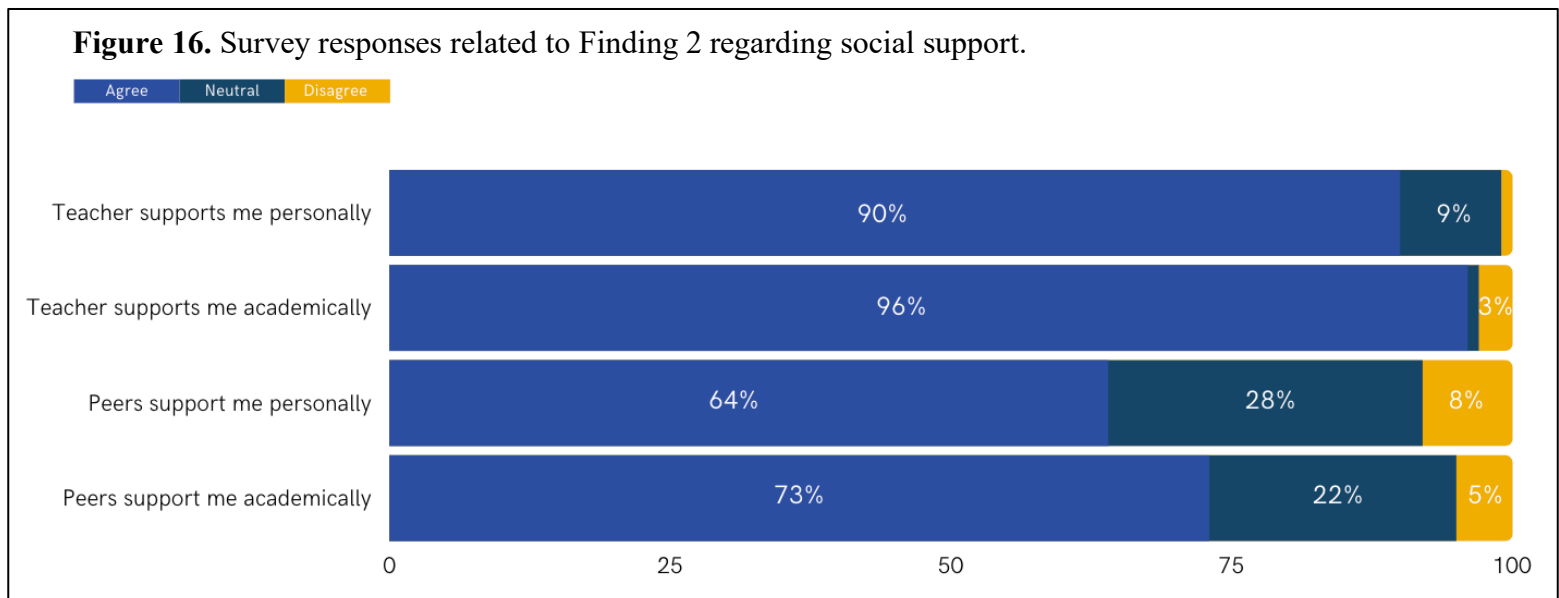
Finding 2: Students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press.

The second research question asked how students reported experiencing factors related to program retention within the Boswell High School AVID elective course. The AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) highlights three factors related to program retention: social support, relational trust, and academic press. Salina et al. (2013) defines these domains:

- *Social support*: “Support students get from each other and from adults in the school” (Salina et al., 2013, p. 65).
- *Relational trust*: “The conscious regulation of one person’s dependence upon another... coupled with ‘reliance on another’s good will’” (Salina et al., 2013, p. 66).
- *Academic press*: “Academic press consists of the pressures within the school environment to meet academic goals and standards... Academic press emphasizes high expectations, accountability, and academic rigor” (Salina et al., 2013, p. 65).

A significant finding from this study was that students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press

Social Support. Social support is one of the three key domains that impact program retention as described in the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013). Generally, the survey results indicate that students overall do experience social support in the AVID elective course: the first three survey results displayed in Figure 16 below indicate that students feel motivated and supported personally and academically by the AVID teacher and their AVID peers.



A closer analysis of the survey data broken down into groups of continuing and unenrolled students continues to highlight the social support that students experience in the AVID elective class. A comparison of the mean survey responses from students who continued in the AVID elective course versus the mean survey responses from students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course demonstrates that social support is generally experienced by both groups, with the mean response skewing toward agree (mean of 4.00) and strongly agree (mean of 5.00) for almost all questions (Figure 17). For example, both groups of students reported getting help in AVID they could not get elsewhere: Continuing students answered with a mean of 3.46, and unenrolled students answered with a mean of 3.33.

Figure 17. Comparison of the mean survey responses related to social support between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the “Continued” column, n=68 “Unenrolled” column, n=6.

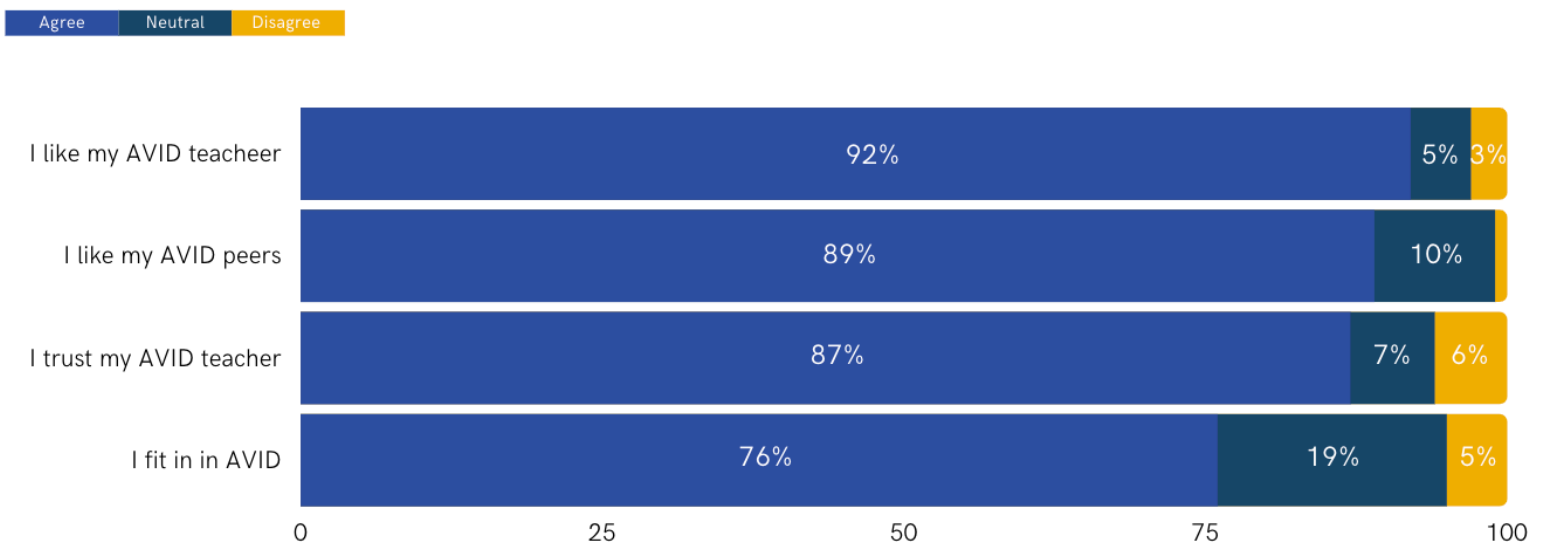
Part 3: Social Support		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
13	My AVID teacher supports me academically.	4.18	4.50
14	My AVID teacher supports me personally.	3.93	4.33
15	My AVID peers support me academically.	3.48	3.50
16	My AVID peers support me personally.	3.22	3.50
17	Other Boswell High School teachers recognize and support AVID students.	2.99	3.33
18	Boswell High School administrators recognize and support AVID students.	3.22	3.17
19	Non-AVID students say positive things about AVID.	2.06	3.00
20	My AVID teacher is there for me when I need help.	3.96	4.33
21	I get help in my AVID class that I can't get anywhere else.	3.46	3.33
22	AVID students get to do things that other students don't.	3.03	3.17

In the focus group held with currently enrolled AVID elective students, the findings from the survey were confirmed. Students noted how the support they received in AVID was a highlight of the class. One student shared, “AVID has helped me a lot with my GPA, and it has helped me be on top of things. I am in the top 10% of my class [academically] because I am in AVID. It’s helping a lot with my GPA.”

When the group was asked what AVID meant to them, one student responded, “It’s the social aspect.” Another agreed, elaborating, “Before the pandemic... we had field trips, and on Fridays, we played games as a group, as an AVID family. That was really nice. I enjoyed it. We talked. We connected. That's what I think AVID is about.” A third student added, “We talk about our sports and go to the games to support our friends. When we’re struggling, and we’re kind of irritated with school, we talk about it and let it out. I feel like that’s the best part [of the AVID elective class] ... Everyone’s supporting you and they’re there for you. You can always talk about anything, and they’ll always help you feel better. I feel like that's what AVID is about.”

Relational Trust. Survey and interview data collected for this project demonstrate the presence of relational trust, an influential factor that has been shown to contribute to program completion rates (Salina et. al., 2013). The last survey result displayed in Figure 18 indicates that students like their AVID teacher and their AVID peers, they trust their AVID teacher, and they feel like they fit in in the AVID elective course.

Figure 18. Survey responses related to Finding 2 regarding relational trust.



Further analysis of survey responses demonstrates that students experience relational trust in the AVID elective class. A comparison of the mean survey responses from students who continued in the AVID elective course versus the mean survey responses from students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course demonstrates that relational trust is generally experienced by both groups, with the mean response skewing toward agree (mean of 4.00) and strongly agree (mean of 5.00) for almost all questions (Figure 19). For example, both groups of students trust their AVID teacher: Continuing students answered with a mean of 4.03, and unenrolled students answered with a mean of 4.17.

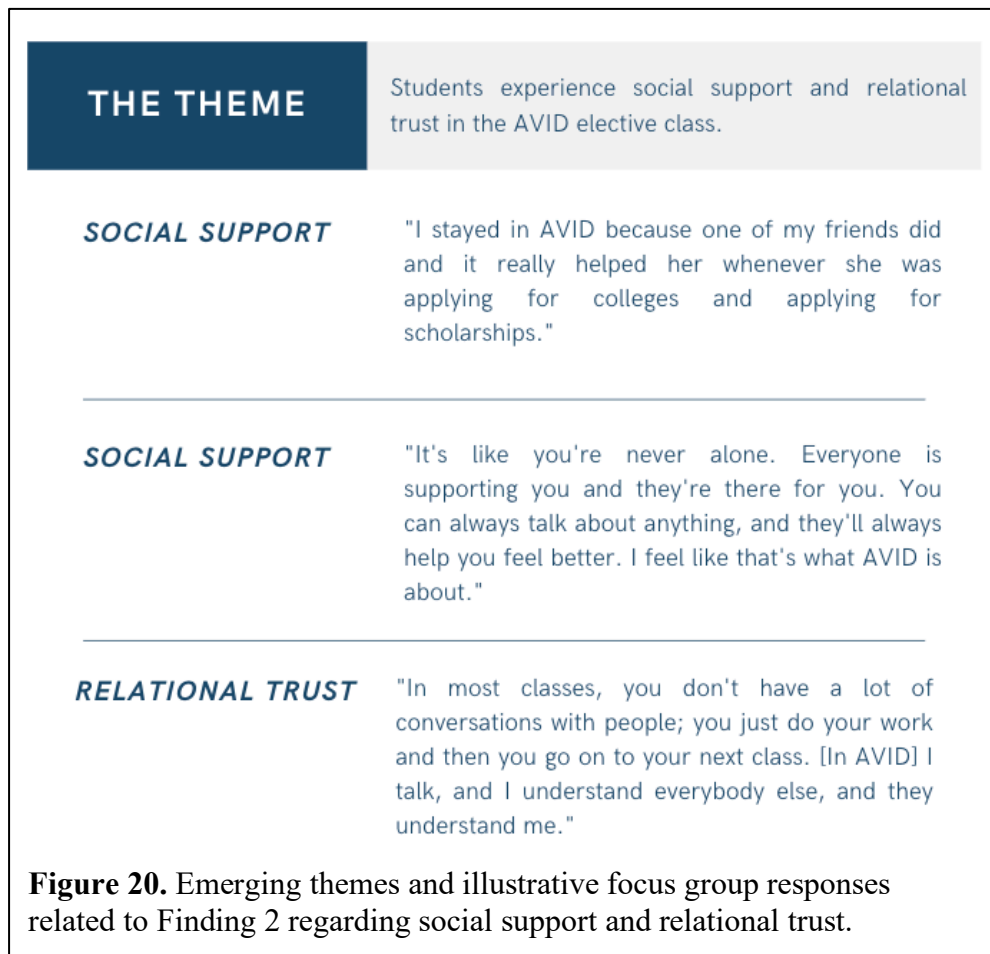
Figure 19. Comparison of the mean survey responses related to relational trust between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the “Continued” column, n=68 “Unenrolled” column, n=6.

Part 4: Relational Trust		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
23	I like my AVID teacher.	4.39	4.50
24	I like my AVID peers.	3.96	3.50
25	I look forward to going to my AVID class.	3.77	3.33
26	I feel safe in my AVID class.	4.01	4.16
27	My parents/family members support my participation in AVID.	3.75	4.00
28	I trust my AVID teacher.	4.03	4.17
29	My AVID teacher is always well-prepared.	3.97	4.17
30	I have fun in AVID.	3.73	3.50
31	My AVID teacher teaches me useful things.	3.96	3.67
32	I would recommend AVID to my friends.	3.37	4.00
33	I fit in the AVID program.	3.33	3.17
34	AVID is effective for me.	3.48	3.17

The focus group conducted with currently enrolled AVID elective students confirmed the presence of relational trust in the AVID elective course as demonstrated by the survey results. One student shared how she felt close with her AVID classmates and stated this gave her an opportunity to have conversations with her peers, who she described as “family”. She said, “In most classes, you don't have a lot of conversations with people; you just do your work and then you go on to your next class. [In AVID,] I talk, and I understand everybody else, and they understand me.” Another student echoed this sentiment by adding, “It’s like you're never alone.”

According to the AVID elective students who participated in the focus group, the concept of the “AVID family” was extended to the AVID teacher as well. When students were asked to describe their AVID teacher, the words students used included “motherly,” “relatable,” “understanding,” “caring,” and “supportive.”

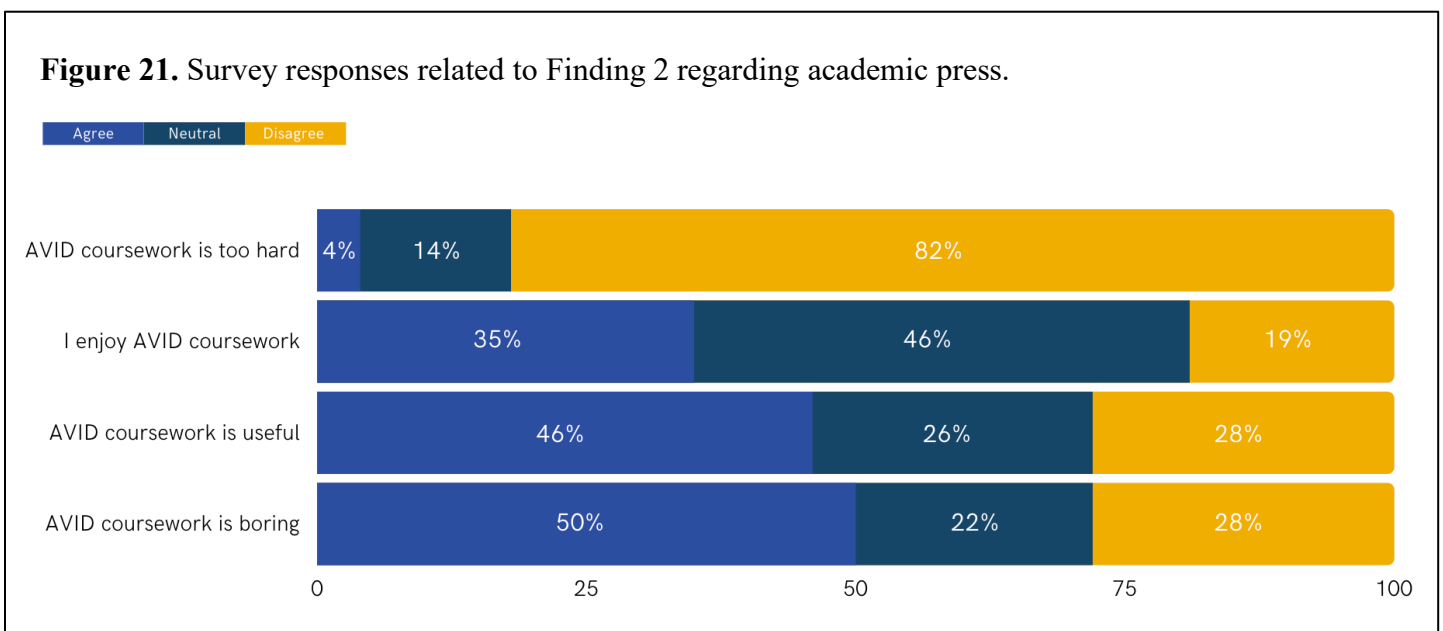
In triangulating the participant responses from the focus group (Figure 20) with the survey data, it is evident that students report experiencing ample social support and relational trust as defined within the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013). The “family” environment provides students with a support system and deep relationships that encourage them to persist through both academic and personal struggles.



Academic Press. The AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) suggests that to influence program completion, programs should ensure that students experience academic press in which they are held to high standards and are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous

but attainable coursework. This study demonstrated that academic press is not evident in the AVID elective course at Boswell High School.

Survey data shows that the majority of students do not think that the AVID coursework is too hard. Only 35% of survey participants report that the coursework is enjoyable, less than half of survey participants find the coursework is useful, and about half of survey participants find the coursework to be boring (Figure 21).



A comparison of the mean survey responses from students who continued in the AVID elective course versus the mean survey responses from students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course demonstrates that academic press is generally experienced similarly for both groups, except for in a few areas (Figure 22). For example, students who have unenrolled from the AVID elective course report enjoying the coursework less. For question 7, asking whether students enjoy the AVID elective coursework, the continuing students' responses were skewed toward

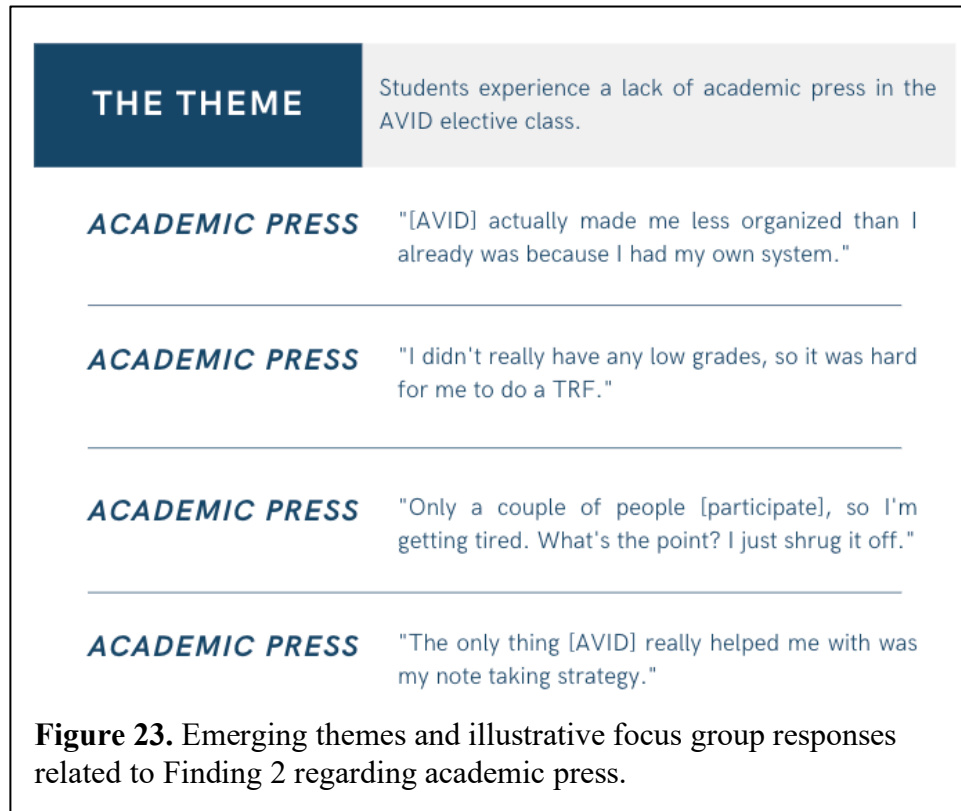
agree with a mean of 3.15, while the unenrolled students' responses were skewed toward disagree with a mean of 2.83.

Figure 22. Comparison of the mean survey responses related to academic press between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the “Continued” column, n=68 “Unenrolled” column, n=6.

Part 2: Academic Press		Mean Response	
#	Question	Continued	Unenrolled
3	Being an AVID student means that I have to meet high expectations.	3.66	4.00
4	The AVID elective course has challenged me in a good way.	3.63	3.33
5	I could achieve the expectations the AVID elective course had for me.	4.13	4.17
6	I have been bored with the AVID elective coursework.	3.18	3.67
7	I enjoy the AVID elective coursework.	3.15	2.83
8	The AVID elective coursework is useful to me.	3.25	3.83
9	My AVID teacher believes I can earn good grades.	4.22	4.33
10	The AVID elective coursework is too hard.	1.75	2.33
11	My AVID teacher holds me accountable for my schoolwork.	3.99	3.67
12	AVID motivates me to be a good student.	3.94	3.50

The supplemental focus group and interview with former and current AVID elective students supported what was being shown in the survey data: The overarching theme was that AVID students do not experience appropriate academic press in the class. Instead, AVID coursework is often redundant, rigid, and seemingly meaningless from the student perspective (Figure 23). All participants had something to share related to this sentiment.

For example, in the focus group, one student shared that she considered dropping the AVID elective course her freshman year because AVID had actually made her less organized. AVID requires that students carry a binder that is graded weekly, but this student had her own fully functioning system consisting of other organizational elements. However, her system did not fit within the AVID “box” of binder expectations, so her AVID teacher required her to meet the rigid expectations or risk failing. The student said that her grade in AVID quickly dropped because of



this, and AVID became her class with the lowest grade. She noted, "If you already have high grades and you're doing badly in AVID, it doesn't look right to me. You shouldn't be doing badly in this class when you can

do well in all the rest." Others agreed that there were issues with the way in which AVID coursework is implemented and shared similar stories about other aspects of the curriculum.

Another student in the focus group spoke about the structured collaborative study groups, called "tutorials." Tutorials make up almost half of the AVID curriculum, and they are conducted every Tuesday and Thursday in the Boswell High School elective classes. Before tutorials, students fill out a Tutorial Request Form, or TRF, to identify a problem they are having in other classes that they would like to work through their tutorials. In the focus group, the student shared his frustration in that he was forced to identify a problem each Tuesday and Thursday through a TRF, even when he was doing well in his other classes and did not need help.

The student explained how AVID failed to adapt to this dilemma in tutorials, discouraging participation from many of his peers. He shared, "Only a couple of people [participate], so I'm

getting tired. What's the point? I just shrug it off." He admitted this led him to consider dropping the AVID elective course this year.

Finding 3

Research Question 3: What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?

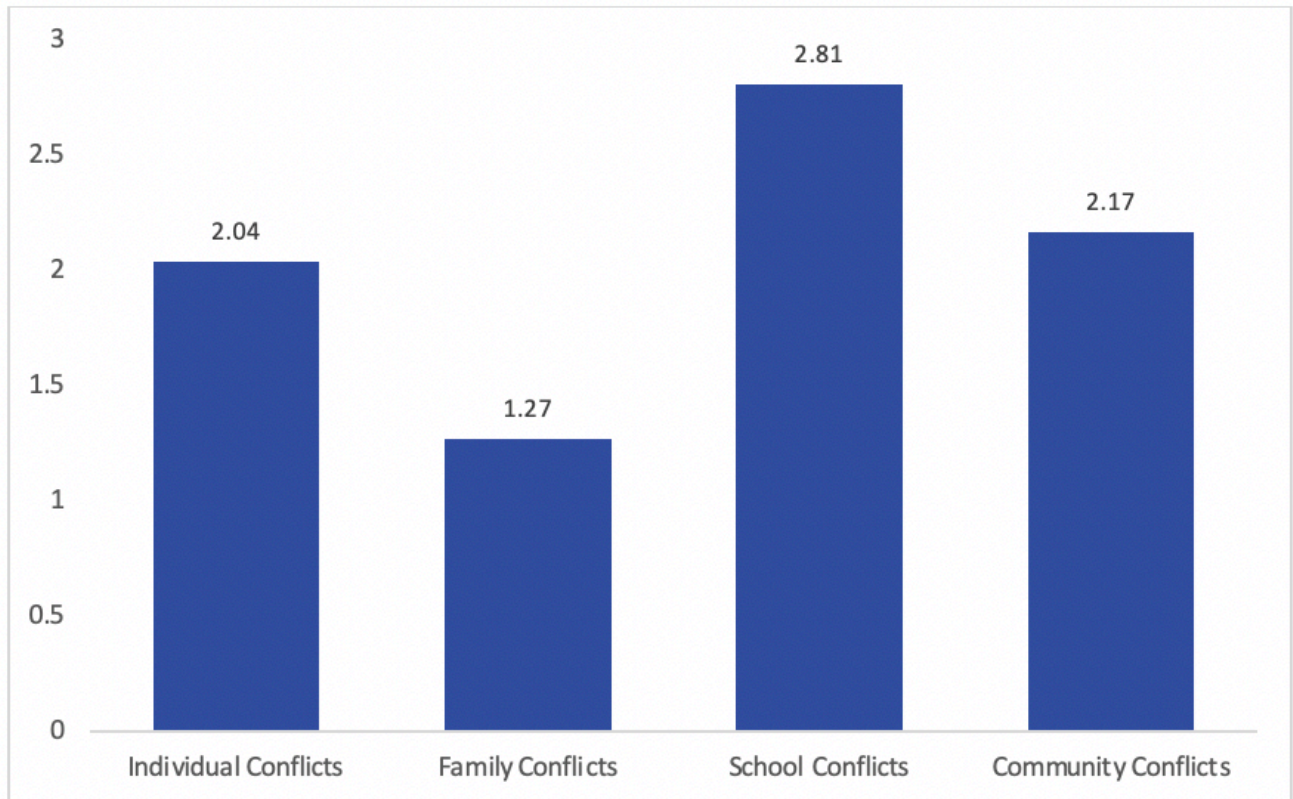
Finding 3: There are no clear patterns in student responses related to the four domains that have the potential to contribute to program attrition (individual, school, family, and community conflict domains). However, the three most reported conflicts within these domains include 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes.

The third research question from this study inquired what domains related to program attrition unenrolled students experienced within the AVID elective class. For this research question, the domains described by Hammond et al. (2007) were explored: individual, family, school, and community conflicts. The third major finding from this study was that across the four domains, there were no clear patterns in student experiences. However, the three most reported conflicts within these domains include 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes.

Overall Student Experiences. 6 students who had unenrolled from the AVID elective course answered survey questions related to the four domains that Hammond et al. (2007) describe as likely to impact program dropout rates: Individual conflicts, family conflicts, school conflicts, and community conflicts. To assess patterns in student responses related to the four domains that

have the potential to contribute to program attrition, the means across the responses for this part of the survey were compared (Figure 24).

Figure 24. Comparison of the overall mean responses for each domain within Part 2 of the survey between students who have stayed in the AVID elective course and students who decided to unenroll from the course. For the responses displayed in this table, n=6.



Prior to the creation of the table displayed in Figure 24 above, all questions were re-aligned to have a negative connotation so that the means indicated a high number of conflicts within each domain: The mean response for any questions that had a positive connotation as written were given an inverse value as displayed in Figure 25 below. As such, a value of 4 or 5 indicates that the student agreed with the question did experience the conflict addressed, a value of 3 indicates a neutral response, and a value of 1 or 2 indicates that the student disagreed with the question and did not experience the conflict addressed.

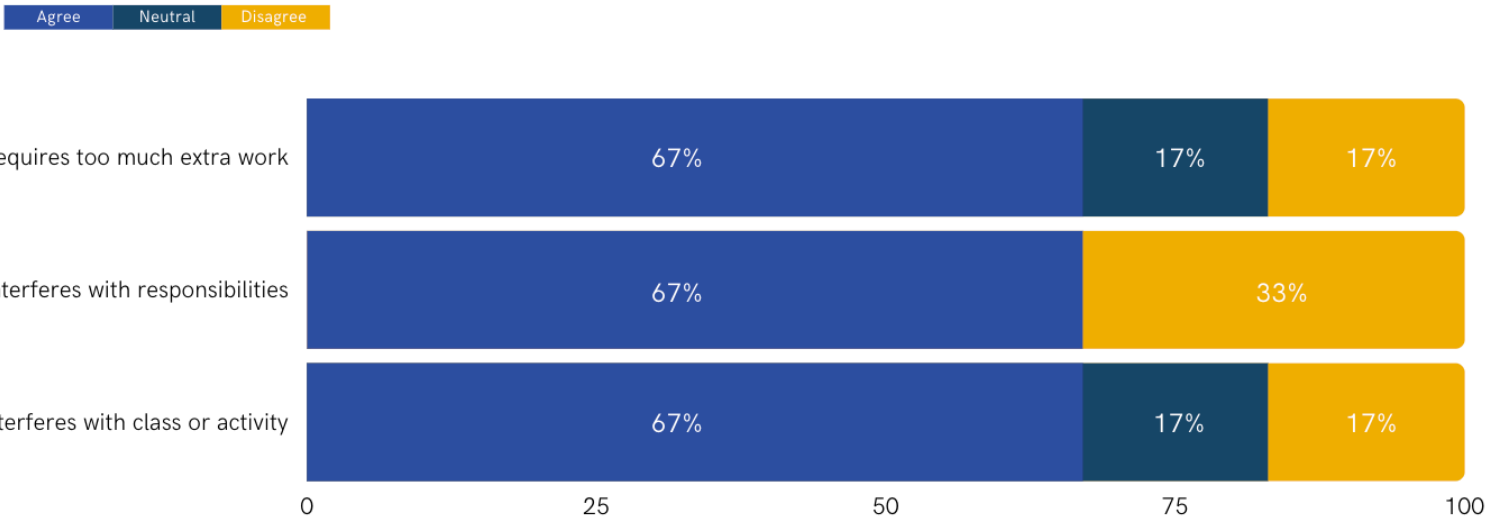
Figure 25. Mean responses to each question in Part 3 of the survey regarding conflicts experienced by students who have decided to unenroll from the course with questions highlighted in red re-aligned to have a negative connotation. For this section of the survey, n=6.

Part 2: Individual Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
6	I had conflicts with my AVID teacher.	1.33
7	I had conflicts with my AVID peers.	1.67
8	AVID got in the way of other parts of my life.	3.17
9	I have a lot of friends in AVID.	1.33
10	I want to go to college.	0.83
11	AVID helped me succeed in other classes.	0.50
12	AVID required too much extra work.	3.67
13	I found it hard to concentrate in AVID.	2.17
14	I didn't use AVID strategies in my other classes.	2.50
15	I have other people who can help me get to college.	3.17
16	I was proud to be an AVID student.	0.67
17	AVID was exactly what I thought it was going to be.	2.00
18	AVID interferes with my responsibilities (like work or extracurriculars).	3.50
Part 3: Family Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
19	My family supported me in AVID.	0.67
20	My family liked my AVID teacher.	0.83
21	My family has resources to help me get into college.	1.00
22	My family is supportive of my college dreams.	0.50
23	I have responsibilities at home that take up a lot of time.	3.33
Part 4: School Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
24	I participate in another activity or class at school that conflicts with AVID.	3.50
25	Another extracurricular activity is more important to me than AVID.	3.17
26	My other teachers encouraged me to be a part of AVID.	2.33
27	AVID students are respected at Boswell High School.	3.67
28	My counselor helped me fit AVID in my schedule.	1.67
29	AVID was a priority for me when signing up for classes.	2.50
30	There are other programs at school that are more useful to me than AVID.	2.83
Part 5: Community Conflicts		Mean Response
#	Question	Unenrolled
23	A lot of people in our community go to college.	1.83
24	There are resources in our community to help me pay for college.	3.17
25	It's necessary to go to college to work in our community.	2.17
26	People who go to college are respected in our community.	1.50

With the questions re-aligned to have a negative connotation, the mean response for questions in the individual conflict domain was 2.04; the mean response for questions in the family conflict domain was 1.27; the mean response for questions in the individual school domain was 2.81; and the mean response for questions in the community conflict domain was 2.17. Notably, the means for all four of the domains are skewed toward a value of 1 or 2, indicating that the students generally did not experience the conflicts addressed in the questions. Additionally, the sample size for this portion of the survey was fairly small with $n=6$. Therefore, it was determined that there were no clear patterns in student responses related to the four domains that have the potential to contribute to program attrition.

Most Reported Conflicts. Given that no overall patterns related to the domains as a whole were evident, the table in Figure 25 above was used to compare mean responses for individual questions. Specifically, questions with a mean response of 3.50 or above were examined. The three questions that had mean responses that met this criterion were question 12 within the individual conflict domain (AVID required too much extra work, mean response of 3.67), question 18 within the individual conflict domain (AVID interferes with my responsibilities (like work or extracurriculars), mean response of 3.50) and question 24 within the school conflict domain (I participate in another activity or class at school that interferes with AVID, mean response of 3.50). A breakdown of the responses on the Likert scale for each of these questions is displayed in Figure 26 below.

Figure 26. Breakdown of survey responses on the Likert scale for questions 12, 18, and 24 regarding conflicts experienced by unenrolled students.



From a closer examination of survey responses based on the mean responses and on the breakdown of Likert scale responses, the conclusion can be drawn that students who have unenrolled from the AVID elective course most experience three conflicts specifically: 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes.

With an understanding that these three conflicts are the most prevalent for unenrolled students, the AVID Site Coordinator can make informed decisions about how to prevent barriers for student enrollment and increase retention.

Research Question 4: What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?

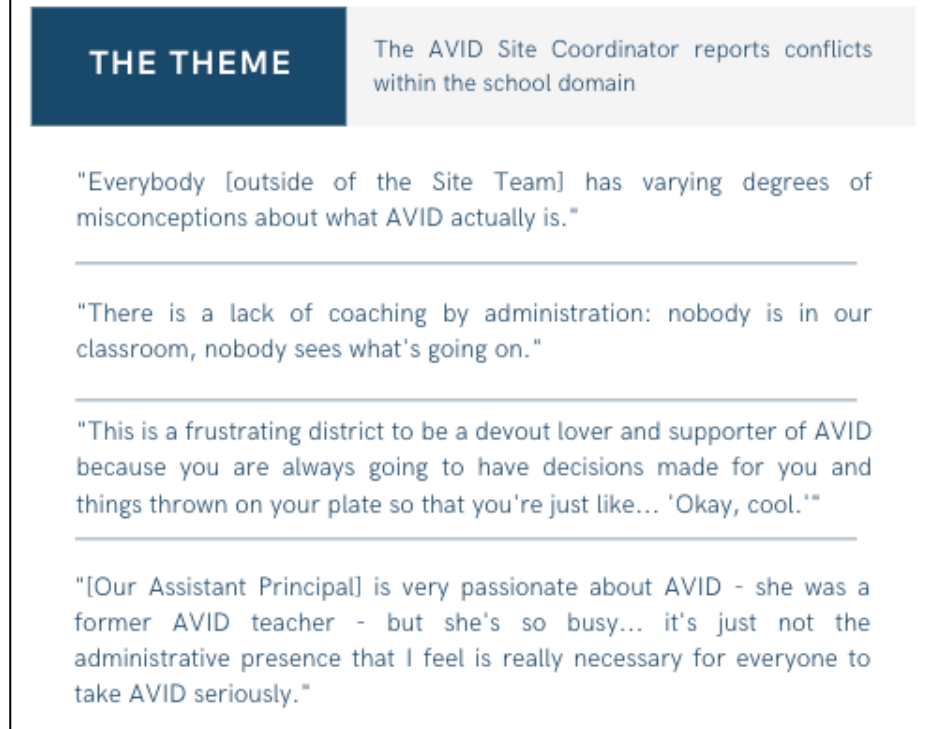
Finding 4: The AVID Site Coordinator reports challenges with schoolwide adoption of the AVID program as it is intended, which impacts stakeholder perceptions of AVID and results in weak recruitment and disorganized scheduling.

The last research question asked about what the AVID Site Coordinator reported was impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course from her perspective. Mainly, the AVID Site Coordinator reported challenges with schoolwide adoption of the AVID program as it is intended, which impacts stakeholder perceptions of AVID and results in weak recruitment and disorganized scheduling.

As it is intended for implementation on secondary campuses across the country, AVID exists schoolwide at a system-level. This means that while a major component of AVID is the elective course that was created to support underserved students in fulfilling their college dreams, the program as a whole is not designed to function solely as a standalone elective course. Rather, when AVID is implemented, it is meant to be fully adapted across entire campuses to impact college- and career-readiness for all students. Support from campus leadership and teachers is essential to this.

The AVID Site Coordinator revealed that this intended AVID schoolwide approach as outlined in the AVID Handbook (2021) is not being fulfilled. The AVID Site Coordinator reported a lack of involvement in the program from

Figure 27. AVID Site Coordinator responses related to Finding 4.



stakeholders including administrators, counselors, and teachers (Figure 27). First, she reported that campus leadership is incredibly busy with important duties and responsibilities other than AVID, and that has been a challenge. Administrators should ideally champion AVID as a campus initiative, but this has not been a priority. This lack of visible administrative support for AVID has impacted the schoolwide buy-in that research says is imperative for retention in the elective class.

Due to the lack of visible administrative support and absence of accountability, only 24% of teachers, administrators, and counselors at Boswell High School have attended AVID trainings that are crucial to program support. The AVID Site Coordinator noted that this has resulted in a lack of understanding of AVID: "Everybody [outside of the Site Team] has varying degrees of misconceptions about what AVID actually is." Again, to the AVID Site Coordinator, this is an issue that starts with administration. Without administrative support, it is difficult to garner buy-

in from stakeholders across the campus. However, she reported that there is no direct involvement by administration in or out of the AVID classroom to begin this process, stating, “There is a lack of coaching by administration: nobody is in our classroom, nobody sees what’s going on.”

This gap from limited leadership in the system-wide approach results in a slippery slope of issues that result in attrition according to the AVID Site Coordinator. One way that enrollment is negatively impacted by limited leadership is in the recruitment process. System-level support is especially important during the process of recruiting students to enroll in the AVID elective course. Since the AVID Site Coordinator is largely contained to teaching the elective course, other teachers must recommend students who fit the AVID elective student criteria as outlined by AVID; counselors must enforce a hold on students’ requests to enroll in the AVID elective class until they have been approved through the application process; and administrators must advocate for campus-wide involvement and ensure stakeholders are accountable for participating in the process appropriately. Without this team effort, misidentified students are likely to enroll in the course, resulting in attrition as these misidentified realize the coursework is not applicable to them. Administrators should ideally champion AVID as a campus initiative, especially inspiring all teachers across the campus to informally participate in recruitment by recommending the AVID elective course for students who meet AVID elective student criteria.

Additionally, the AVID Site Coordinator reported that “there is a breakdown with the counselors. Counselors will just let kids bounce in and out of AVID without consulting me.” The counselors play a major role in recruitment as they are the ones solely responsible for crafting student schedules. However, because they are not held accountable by administration, counselors do not actively participate in supporting AVID recruitment as it is designed, and students are able to easily add the course from their schedule without participating in interviews or completing an

application. This problem with unmonitored scheduling for AVID was made clear in the interview with the student who had dropped the AVID elective course, who shared “It was really easy [to drop AVID] ... I just switched it, and no one asked me anything.”

Leadership, counselors, and teachers do not actively participate in recruitment at Boswell High School, resulting in students being misidentified and enrolling without completing the formal application and interview processes, which leads to attrition. When students who do not meet the AVID elective student criteria enroll in the AVID class anyway, they are likely to drop the course when they realize that AVID coursework is not intended for them. For example, a student might speak to a counselor about joining the AVID elective class when he realizes that his friends are in it, but he may have straight A’s and have no problem with studying, taking notes, or staying organized. Therefore, the class would be unnecessary for him, and he would likely unenroll at the next term.

The frustration and discouragement felt by the AVID Site Coordinator was evident throughout the interview. She shared “This is a frustrating district to be a devout lover and supporter of AVID because you are always going to have decisions made for you and things thrown on your plate so that you're just like... ‘Okay, cool.’” Regardless, the AVID Site Coordinator understands the challenges that administrators face. She shared that “[Their Assistant Principal] is very passionate about AVID; she was a former AVID teacher. But she’s so busy... it’s just not the administrative presence that I feel is really necessary for everyone to take AVID seriously.” From the survey data and the interviews conducted with the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator and the student who had dropped the AVID elective course, it is clear that school conflicts are occurring at this site.

Recommendations

Considering the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) and the conclusions drawn from the literature review, the following are recommendations intended for the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator to prevent attrition and increase retention within the Boswell High School elective course.

Recommendation 1

Recommendation 1: Adapt AVID coursework

One major finding of this study was that students do not report experiencing appropriate academic press within the Boswell High School AVID elective class. The AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013) emphasizes the importance of academic press in increasing program retention. One component of academic press is ensuring that teachers are responsive to student needs. This ensures that all students are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous but attainable coursework. Although the study conducted by Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) did highlight the importance of following the AVID design closely, one of the key findings was that teachers of AVID elective courses with low attrition rates sometimes made minimal but meaningful adjustments to the curricula to meet the needs of their students. For example, in the AVID elective classes that were observed, the students were sometimes granted permission to skip the weekly Cornell note taking assignment that is assigned for each grade in the AVID curriculum. Applying the AVID curriculum with flexibility helps to build relational trust and social support, and academic press can still be maintained so long as the remaining assignments and general academic expectations throughout the course are rigorous but attainable.

At Boswell High School, AVID elective teachers are currently applying AVID curricula extremely rigidly, which does not benefit students. In fact, this practice sometimes harms students

and contributes greatly to student decisions to unenroll from the course. This was especially evident in conversations had with students who participated in the focus group conducted for the purpose of this project, as one student shared that she considered dropping the AVID elective course her freshman year because the lack of flexibility in expectations related to organization. This student had her own fully functioning organizational system consisting of folders, but her AVID teacher required her to carry a binder instead. The student reported that her grades suffered as a result. While the AVID course curriculum is certainly ideal for students who need extensive assistance in getting college-ready, those who demonstrate proven success with alternate – but similar – strategies should be supported, not failed compulsorily.

Recommendation 2

Recommendation 2: Highlight applicability

Second, to increase academic press and bolster retention, AVID students must routinely have opportunities to recognize how AVID coursework is immediately supportive of their short- and long-term academic and personal goals. As outlined by the AHOD conceptual framework (Salina, 2013), part of academic press is ensuring students are encouraged and motivated to engage in rigorous coursework. The students in the focus group conducted for the purpose of this project revealed that they feel motivated when they see the results of engaging in the AVID elective coursework. For this reason, emphasizing the connection between each AVID strategy as it is utilized in the elective course and how it will be applicable for college coursework is essential.

As suggested in the literature, alumni success stories are an effective retention practice that could contribute to supporting this realization for students. For example, in focus groups conducted by Watt, Huerta, and Alkan (2011), AVID alumni reported how the skills and resources they accessed in their high school AVID elective course like notetaking, organization strategies, and

responsibility contributed to their success in college. By integrating similar testimonies as AVID strategies are introduced in the elective class, utilizing older AVID students as mentors, and hosting alumni as guest speakers and on interactive discussion panels, students are more likely to see the purpose in the curriculum and feel encouraged to persist through challenging coursework, resulting in decreased attrition rates.

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3: Clearly communicate intentions and practices system-wide

Third, to garner buy-in from all AVID stakeholders across the campus, the AVID intentions and practices must be more clearly communicated throughout the organization. The literature review revealed that attrition can be minimized by purposefully implementing the student recruitment and selection process.

The Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator noted that campus-wide support of the AVID program was lacking, especially from administrators and counselors. This has impacted many aspects of the AVID program related to attrition and retention. For example, one such area that has been impacted is recruitment. The recruitment guidelines as they are developed by AVID (Appendix A) include not allowing students into the elective course without completing an application and interview that probes for student needs and abilities. However, the counselors at Boswell High School frequently allow students to skip this practice and enroll students into the class at their request without the consent of the AVID Site Coordinator. Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) shared that when AVID Site Coordinators do not follow the intended AVID recruitment guidelines in this way, attrition increases as misidentified students either do not need the support provided by AVID or find AVID coursework too demanding. To prevent the wrong students from enrolling in

the AVID elective class in this way, Boswell High School administrators, counselors, and teachers must commit to a more system-wide approach to implementing the AVID program.

A system-wide approach to implementing AVID should include consistent collaboration through Site Team meetings and purposeful discourse throughout the year. The AVID mission of ensuring all students are college- and career-ready should be championed as aligning with the needs of all students across the campus. AVID could be highlighted as a supportive program for both students and teachers as well; AVID offers professional development that is relevant for educators in all subject areas. Additionally, stakeholders should support recruitment; counselors, administrators, and teachers across the campus should help to identify students who meet the AVID elective student criteria and advocate for the AVID Site Coordinator to uphold the application and interview processes as they are designed. It will be difficult to make progress in growing the AVID program and the AVID elective course without a team effort at Boswell High School. Through collaborative efforts from the Site Team and other stakeholders, the AVID program can be implemented as it is intended, and students can be appropriately placed in the AVID elective course.

Discussion

Overview

To fully understand the Boswell High School AVID program and how attrition and retention occur within the AVID elective course, four research questions were posed:

1. Why do students report staying enrolled or unenrolling from the AVID elective course?
2. What factors related to program retention do students report experiencing within the AVID elective course?
3. What domains related to program attrition do students who unenrolled from the AVID elective course report experiencing?
4. What does the AVID Site Coordinator report is impacting attrition and retention within the AVID elective course?

Four findings regarding the AVID student experience were revealed in the research. The first finding was that students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press. Second, students report experiencing higher rates of social support and relational trust in the AVID elective course, but report experiencing less academic press. Third, there are no clear patterns in student responses related to the four domains that have the potential to contribute to program attrition (individual, school, family, and community conflict domains). However, the three most reported conflicts within these domains include 1) AVID required too much extra work, 2) AVID interfered with personal responsibilities, and 3) AVID interfered with other school-related activities or classes. The final finding was that the AVID Site Coordinator reports challenges with schoolwide adoption of the AVID program as it is intended, which impacts stakeholder perceptions of AVID and results in weak recruitment and disorganized scheduling.

This case study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research practices to examine the AVID student elective experience, determine why students choose to exit or remain enrolled in the elective course and explore conflicts experienced by students and the AVID Site Coordinator at Boswell High School. This study design could be replicated by other AVID programs to gain an understanding of the AVID experience and why attrition occurs at specific sites and with specific groups of students. Future research will help AVID programs like the Boswell High School AVID program to increase retention and improve the AVID student experience.

The data collected in this project highlighted that most students enrolled in the Boswell High School AVID elective course greatly enjoy their experience. They report feeling like they have a family in AVID. However, a lack of academic press leaves students wanting more rigor, causing some students to unenroll from the course. Given that attrition occurs in AVID programs across the country, the findings from this study could be used to re-design AVID coursework for a more fulfilling academic experience at Boswell High School and in similar AVID programs.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that students who had unenrolled from the AVID elective course seemingly had no intrinsic incentive to participate in the survey; only six students who met this criterion responded to the survey. Therefore, the participant pool may have been skewed toward people who were intrinsically motivated to participate in the study because they either still feel connected to the AVID program in some way or had a negative experience with the AVID program and hoped to convey their thoughts to inspire change. By offering a gift card as an extrinsic incentive to participate, though, this limitation may have been somewhat counteracted.

Another limitation is that the global pandemic that impacted schools in 2020 eliminated or complicated many of the key parts of the AVID program that enhance the AVID student

experience, altering much of the academic experience in particular for the 2020-2021 school year. For example, the AVID strategy of tutorials that contribute to almost half of the AVID curricula is typically conducted in collaborative groups in person. This was hindered due to COVID-19 protocol and the option for students to attend school remotely. However, by asking students to consider their experiences in AVID prior to the pandemic when collecting data, this limitation was likely reduced.

A last limitation is the small sample size of survey participants who had unenrolled through the AVID elective class. Because only 6 participants who met this criterion completed the survey, a statistical analysis was not possible. For example, the limited sample size prevented the opportunity to examine whether the constructs of the conceptual framework came together via a Cronbach's alpha test. Instead, the only possibility was to conduct a descriptive study to provide information to the AVID Site Coordinator that could be useful in implementing programmatic change.

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to address the problem of attrition within the Boswell High School AVID elective course. The findings from this research will aid the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator in addressing the root causes of this problem to increase retention and improve the AVID student experience in the AVID elective course.

In her final interview, the Boswell High School AVID Site Coordinator noted that “Kids are actual human beings. They have a story, and they’re not just numbers.” This captured the underlying goal of this project: To do what’s best for kids. The purpose of this case study at its core was to Provide data that could be used by the AVID Site Coordinator and campus leadership to inform improvement efforts that increase course retention. With that in mind, the story that

students are telling as shown in the research here is that they cherish the support and relationships they get from AVID, but they crave more rigor that prepares them to achieve their college dreams. If that can be achieved along with the support from the campus community, the impact that the Boswell High School AVID program can have on its students is limitless.

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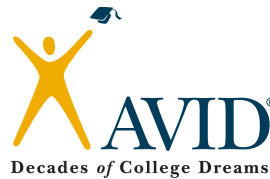
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Appendix A: AVID Recruitment Packet Overview



AVID Student Recruitment Packet

Please note: This packet is intended to assist you in developing your own recruitment plan/materials. It is necessary to modify and insert school name, dates, coordinator, contact information and data points. Before printing, remove the page numbers. *Most items that need to be modified have been placed in bold and in capital letters.*

1. Recruitment should be a site team effort, which should also include the administrator and counselor. All forms and procedures should be approved and signed by the principal prior to beginning the recruitment process. Make sure to have the principal and coordinator sign the cover letter prior to copying for the students.
2. As your team refines the student selection process, document all recruitment meetings and conversations for use as evidence for certification.
3. It is essential to modify these recruitment materials/ tools to identify and recruit according to your locally defined criteria/ “middle” (Essential 1.1).
4. Start the recruitment process by identifying potential candidates through data (i.e. CST scores and GPA).
5. **Recruiting through a Culturally Proficient Lens:** As you start to analyze your recruitment pool (gender, ethnicity, parent education/ SES, attendance/tardies, and behavior), consider your site team’s recruitment practices. It is important that we understand the reasons for attendance and behavior prior to making decisions to exclude students from the AVID program (Page 6 creates the opportunity for students to help you understand their situation that could be considered negative.) Take notes to document your recruitment conversations on the following page.
6. Distribute recruitment packet to those students who have been identified through recruitment data.
7. Recruitment should be linked to AVID Center General Data. Before finalizing the student selection, use the data activity on the last page to ensure that the AVID student population mirrors the school-wide demographics.
8. All stakeholders should be aware of the AVID program, recruitment process, and mission. It is important to conduct meetings for staff, parents, and students. Parent meetings should be held numerous times to afford parents the opportunity to attend when they are available. Save recruitment meeting sign ins, agendas, and PowerPoints for certification evidence and refinement.

Appendix B: AVID CCI

A complete copy of the AVID CCI can be found [here](#).

AVID Schoolwide Domains

The CCI is structured around four AVID Schoolwide Domains: Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture.

<p>INSTRUCTION <i>promotes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WICOR® Strategies ▶ 21st Century Skills ▶ Student Leadership Skills ▶ Goal-Setting/Monitoring ▶ Rigor for All 	<p>SYSTEMS <i>support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ AVID Site/District Teams ▶ Professional Learning ▶ Secondary AVID Elective Classes ▶ Equity and Access to Rigorous Courses ▶ Data Collection and Analysis 	<p>LEADERSHIP <i>ensures:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Strategic Planning ▶ Modeling of Expectations ▶ College Readiness Mission and Vision ▶ Career Readiness ▶ Distributed Leadership Approach 	<p>CULTURE <i>fosters:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ College Awareness and Preparation ▶ Common Belief in Student Success ▶ Family and Community Involvement ▶ High Expectations for All ▶ Positive and Safe Learning Environment 
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I. AVID Schoolwide Instruction

AVID Schoolwide instruction occurs when the entire instructional staff utilizes AVID strategies, other best instructional practices, and 21st century tools to ensure college readiness for AVID Elective students and improved academic performance for all students.

II. AVID Schoolwide Systems

AVID is Schoolwide when systems are in place that support governance, curriculum and instruction, data collection and analysis, professional learning, and student and parent outreach to ensure college readiness for AVID Elective students and improved academic performance for all students.

III. AVID Schoolwide Leadership

AVID Schoolwide leadership sets the vision and tone that promote college readiness and high expectations for all students in the school.

IV. AVID Schoolwide Culture

AVID Schoolwide culture is evident when the AVID philosophy progressively shifts beliefs and behaviors resulting in an increase of students meeting college readiness requirements.

AVID Schoolwide Subdomains (Secondary)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization and Reading) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of the AVID Elective 2. Access to Rigor and Student Support 3. Assessment of Student Progress 4. Professional Learning | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. College Readiness Mission and Vision 2. Representative Governance 3. Strategic College Readiness Planning | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rigor 2. Community Activities and College Awareness 3. College-Going Environment |
|--|---|--|---|

Appendix C: Survey Draft

Below is the draft version of the survey sent to current and former Boswell High School elective course students. The actual survey that was disseminated via email was configured using Google Forms software.

Survey Draft

Introduction: Welcome to the Boswell High School AVID Elective Course Experience survey. This survey is helping us understand why AVID elective students make the decision to continue enrollment or exit the AVID elective course and how we can better support AVID elective students. At any point that you read the term “course” that is in reference to the Boswell High School AVID elective course. This survey will take approximately one hour to complete.

Section 1: Demographic Information and Student Background

For each of the following questions, unless otherwise directed, please mark the one answer that best describes your experiences as an AVID elective student.

1. What gender do you identify as?

<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Trans-gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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2. What is your ethnicity?

<input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> Latino or Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Two or more ethnicities	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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3. What is your first language?

<input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> Russian <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
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4. Do you qualify for free or reduced lunch?

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not know <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer
---	---

5. Do you receive services from any special program? Check all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Gifted/talented (GT) <input type="checkbox"/> English as a second language (ESL) <input type="checkbox"/> 504	<input type="checkbox"/> Special education (SPED) <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above
--	--

6. Before this school year, for many years have you been a student at Boswell High School?
- 1
 - 2
 - 3
7. Have you ever attended any other high schools?
- Yes
 - No
8. Which grade(s) did you participate in the Boswell High School AVID elective course?
Check all that apply.
- 9th
 - 10th
 - 11th
 - 12th
9. Were you ever enrolled in an AVID elective course at another high school?
- Yes
 - No
10. Were you ever enrolled in an AVID elective course in middle school?
- Yes
 - No
11. Do you participate in any extracurricular activities? Check all that apply.
- Sports
 - Performing arts (theater, choir, band, dance, color guard)
 - Student council
 - Academic competitions (UIL, debate, mock trial)
 - JROTC
 - National Honors Society
 - Community service, volunteering
 - Church
 - Work
 - None of the above
 - Other _____
12. Check the box that describes your overall cumulative GPA:
- 3.5-4.0
 - 3.0-3.49
 - 2.5-2.99
 - 2.0-2.49
 - 2.0 or below
13. Check the box that describes your grades as a freshman:
- Mostly A's
 - A's and B's
 - Mostly B's
 - B's and C's
 - Mostly C's
 - Some failing
 - Mostly failing

14. Check the box that describes your grades as a sophomore:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly A's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly C's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A's and B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Some failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B's and C's | |

15. Check the box that describes your grades as a junior:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly A's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly C's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A's and B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Some failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B's and C's | |

16. Check the box that describes your grades now:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly A's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly C's |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A's and B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Some failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly B's | <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly failing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> B's and C's | |

17. Do you have siblings that have ever been enrolled in an AVID elective?

- Yes
 No
 Do not know

18. Indicate the number of days you are typically absent in a six-week grading period:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7 or more |

19. Indicate the number of office referrals you have had throughout high school:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3-4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 or more |

20. Indicate the highest level of education your mother has completed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school or GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree or higher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |

21. Indicate the highest level of education your father has completed:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school or GED | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate degree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma | <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree or higher |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know |

Section 2: Boswell High School AVID Program Experience

For each of the following questions, please use the scale provided for your response; however if you do not know to what extent you agree with the item, please use the option "Do not know." For each question, consider all experience with the Boswell High School AVID elective course prior to this school year.

Do not know	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly agree
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Part 1: General Experience		
#	Question	Response
1	I had a positive experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.	
2	I have considered exiting the program.	
Part 2: Academic Press		
#	Question	Response
3	Being an AVID student means that I have to meet high expectations.	
4	The AVID elective course has challenged me in a good way.	
5	I could achieve the expectations the AVID elective course had for me.	
6	I have been bored with the AVID elective coursework.	
7	I enjoy the AVID elective coursework.	
8	The AVID elective coursework is useful to me.	
9	My AVID teacher believes I can earn good grades.	
10	The AVID elective coursework is too hard.	
11	My AVID teacher holds me accountable for my schoolwork.	
12	AVID motivates me to be a good student.	
Part 3: Social Support		
#	Question	Response
13	My AVID teacher supports me academically.	
14	My AVID teacher supports me personally.	
15	My AVID peers support me academically.	
16	My AVID peers support me personally.	
17	Other Boswell High School teachers recognize and support AVID students.	
18	Boswell High School administrators recognize and support AVID students.	
19	Non-AVID students say positive things about AVID.	
20	My AVID teacher is there for me when I need help.	
21	I get help in my AVID class that I can't get anywhere else.	
22	AVID students get to do things that other students don't.	
Part 4: Relational Trust		
#	Question	Response
23	I like my AVID teacher.	
24	I like my AVID peers.	
25	I look forward to going to my AVID class.	
26	I feel safe in my AVID class.	

27	My parents/family members support my participation in AVID.	
28	I trust my AVID teacher.	
29	My AVID teacher is always well-prepared.	
30	I have fun in AVID.	
31	My AVID teacher teaches me useful things.	
32	I would recommend AVID to my friends.	
33	I fit in the AVID program.	
34	AVID is effective for me.	

Part 3: Exiting the AVID Program

This section is only for students who have exited the AVID elective course at any time. If you have never exited the AVID elective course, please skip this section.

For each of the following questions, unless otherwise directed, please mark the one answer that best describes your experiences as an AVID elective student.

- Before exiting the AVID elective course, did an AVID teacher talk to you about your decision?
 - Yes
 - No
- After exiting the AVID elective course, did you re-enroll in AVID at a later time?
 - Yes
 - No


For each of the following questions, please use the scale provided for your response; however if you do not know to what extent you agree with the item, please use the option "Do not know." For each question, consider all experience with the Boswell High School AVID elective course.

Do not know	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly agree
----------------	---------------------------	---	---	---	------------------------

Part 1: General Experience		
#	Question	Response
1	I regret exiting the AVID elective course.	
2	Exiting AVID was a good decision for me.	
3	I had no choice but to exit the AVID elective course.	
4	I would like to re-enroll in the AVID elective course.	
5	I was asked to exit AVID because I violated an expectation.	
Part 2: Individual Conflicts		
#	Question	Response
6	I had conflicts with my AVID teacher.	
7	I had conflicts with my AVID peers.	

8	AVID got in the way of other parts of my life.	
9	I have a lot of friends in AVID.	
10	I want to go to college.	
11	AVID helped me succeed in other classes.	
12	AVID required too much extra work.	
13	I found it hard to concentrate in AVID.	
14	I didn't use AVID strategies in my other classes.	
15	I have other people who can help me get to college.	
16	I was proud to be an AVID student.	
17	AVID was exactly what I thought it was going to be.	
18	AVID interferes with my responsibilities (like work or extracurriculars).	
Part 3: Family Conflicts		
#	Question	Response
19	My family supported me in AVID.	
20	My family liked my AVID teacher.	
21	My family has resources to help me get into college.	
22	My family is supportive of my college dreams.	
23	I have responsibilities at home that take up a lot of time.	
Part 4: School Conflicts		
#	Question	Response
24	I participate in another activity or class at school that conflicts with AVID.	
25	Another extracurricular activity is more important to me than AVID.	
26	My other teachers encouraged me to be a part of AVID.	
27	AVID students are respected at Boswell High School.	
28	My counselor helped me fit AVID in my schedule.	
29	AVID was a priority for me when signing up for classes.	
30	There are other programs at school that are more useful to me than AVID.	
Part 5: Community Conflicts		
#	Question	Response
23	A lot of people in our community go to college.	
24	There are resources in our community to help me pay for college.	
25	It's necessary to go to college to work in our community.	
26	People who go to college are respected in our community.	

Appendix D: Survey Invitation

 1 attachments (103 KB)

Jessica_White_InformedConsentStudents.pdf;

Hello,

My name is Ms. Jessica White and I am the AVID Site Coordinator at Saginaw High School. I am also a doctoral student at Vanderbilt University. I am writing to invite you to participate in a project exploring why AVID elective students make the decision to continue enrollment or exit the AVID elective course. You have been identified as a potential participant for this study because of your experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.

Your participation in this study is extremely important to me and to the Boswell High School AVID program. Your participation will assist in better supporting AVID elective students. If you are interested in participating, please review the attached document of informed consent with your parent or guardian. **Should you agree to participate, you can complete the survey by clicking [here](#).**

Once you complete the survey, I may set up an interview at a time of your convenience. The survey should take approximately an hour and the interview via phone, Zoom, or in-person meeting should take about 30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and your response will be confidential. Participation or nonparticipation will not impact your relationship with Boswell High School or the AVID program.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact me.

Thank you,
Jessica White

Jessica White, M.Ed.

Appendix E: Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Parents and Students

Title of research study: Supporting Program Completion Rates to Impact College Readiness Across an Organization: Addressing Attrition within the Boswell High School AVID Program

Principal investigator: Jessica White

Supported by: This research is supported by Vanderbilt University.

Key information about this research study:

The following is a short summary of this study to help you decide whether to permit your child to be a part of this study:

The purpose of this study is to explore attrition and retention within the AVID program at Boswell High School. Your child will be asked to complete a survey and a follow up interview about their experience with the Boswell High School AVID program. We expect that your child will participate in this research study at times throughout the 2020-2021 school year. The primary risk of participation is the time commitment. The main benefit of participation is contributing to improving the Boswell High School AVID program experience for students. We expect about 100 children will be in this research study.

You can ask all the questions you want before you decide. If you agree to have your child participate in this research, here is what your child will be asked to do:

During the survey and interview processes, you will be asked questions about your experience with the Boswell High School AVID program and your decision to either exit the program or continue enrollment with the program. The interview will be audio-recorded so that the study team may later transcribe the interview. Audio-recording is mandatory to participation. If you do not agree to be audio-recorded, then you cannot participate in this research study.

If you say decline to have your child participate in this research:

Please understand that participation in research is voluntary. You can decide you do not want your child to participate in this research and it will not be held against you or your child in any way.

If you agree to have your child participate in this research, but change your mind later:

Your child can stop and leave the research at any time and it will not be held against you or your child. You can end the survey or interview at any time. If this happens, you will be asked if any data collected from your child up until that point may be used in the research.

This is what will happen with the information collected for this research:

Efforts will be made to limit the use and disclosure of your child's personal information, including research study records, to people who have a need to review this information. Efforts will be made to keep your responses confidential from Boswell High School staff. However, we cannot promise complete secrecy.

Organizations that may inspect and copy your information include the Institutional Review Board (“IRB”) and other representatives of this institution.

Here is some other information that is useful for you and your child to know:

Parents please be aware that under the Protection of Pupils Right Act 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of or materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Jessica White via email at jessica.white@vanderbilt.edu to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

Here is who you and your child can talk to:

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, you can talk to the Principal Investigator Jessica White via email at jessica.white@vanderbilt.edu. This research has been reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (“IRB”). You may talk to them at (615) 322-2918 if your questions, concerns, or complaints are not being answered by the research team; you cannot reach the research team; you want to talk to someone besides the research team; you have questions about your rights as a research participant; or you want to get information or provide input about this research.

Your child’s participation in the survey documents your permission for the named child to take part in this research.

Appendix F: Interview Guide for Students

Interview Guide

Introduction

Informed consent process to be completed before turning on the recording for every interview:

1. Explain the purpose of the focus group.
Thank you for meeting with me today. As you may know, we are interested in understanding why AVID elective students make the decision to continue enrollment or exit the AVID elective course and how we can better support AVID elective students. I am going to be asking you questions about your experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.
2. Confirm consent.
Before we begin the focus group, I want to remind you that participating in this study is voluntary and your responses are confidential. At any point during the interview, if you would like me to turn off the recording, just ask. Do you have any questions about the study before we begin?
3. Turn the recorder on.
This is [INTERVIEW TITLE]. It is [DATE AND TIME]. I am interviewing [DESCRIPTION AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS].

Part 1: Context

1. To begin, I would like to learn more about your experience in the Boswell High School AVID program. During which grade(s) have you been enrolled in the AVID elective course? Are you currently enrolled in the AVID elective course?
2. Have you ever unenrolled from the AVID elective course? If yes, do you think that was the right decision for you? If no, have you considered unenrolling in the AVID elective course?
3. As you understand it, what is the purpose of AVID?
4. Tell me about the AVID recruitment process. How did you join AVID? Why did you join AVID?

Part 2: General Experience and Conceptual Framework Probing

1. Considering your experience as an AVID student overall, was your experience mostly positive or negative? Why? (Probe for domains of conflict – individual, family, school, and community)
2. What are the best part(s) of the AVID program? What are the worst? (Probe for domains of conflict – individual, family, school, and community)
3. Are there any moments that define your experience in the AVID elective course?
4. If you have ever unenrolled or considered unenrolling from the AVID course, tell me why; or, if you have never unenrolled or considered unenrolling from the AVID course, tell me why.
5. Tell me about the work you do in AVID. Is it useful? Is it meaningful? Do you enjoy it? Is it difficult? (Academic press)
6. Tell me about your AVID peers. (Social support)
7. What three words best describe your AVID teacher? (Relational trust)

Part 3: Probing

- Based on answers to the above questions and survey questions, interviewer will probe for more detail.

Appendix G: Interview Guide for AVID Site Coordinator

Interview Guide: AVID Site Coordinator

Introduction

Informed consent process to be completed before turning on the recording for every interview:

1. Explain the purpose of the focus group.
Thank you for meeting with me today. As you may know, we are interested in understanding why AVID elective students make the decision to continue enrollment or exit the AVID elective course and how we can better support AVID elective students. I am going to be asking you questions about your experience with the Boswell High School AVID program.
2. Confirm consent.
Before we begin the interview, I want to remind you that participating in this study is voluntary and your responses are confidential. At any point during the interview, if you would like me to turn off the recording, just ask. Do you have any questions about the study before we begin?
3. Turn the recorder on.
This is [INTERVIEW TITLE]. It is [DATE AND TIME]. I am interviewing [DESCRIPTION AND NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS].

Part 1: Context

1. To begin, I would like to learn more about your role within the Boswell High School AVID program. In what way do you work with and/or support the program?
2. As you understand it, what is the purpose of AVID?

Part 2: General Experience

1. Considering your experience with AVID overall, has your experience mostly been positive or negative? Why? (Probe for domains of conflict – individual, family, school, and community)
2. What is the support like for the AVID program across the campus? How do administrators support AVID? How do other non-AVID teachers support AVID? (Probe for domains of conflict – individual, family, school, and community)
3. What are the best part(s) of the AVID program? What are the worst? (Probe for domains of conflict – individual, family, school, and community)
4. Are there any moments that define your experience with AVID?
5. Why do you think students unenroll or consider unenrolling from the AVID course?
6. What three words best describe AVID students?
7. What three words best describe AVID teachers?

Part 3: Probing

- Based on answers to the above questions and survey questions, interviewer will probe for more detail.