ABSTRACT

LUPER, DENISE LEWIS. Leaders Implementation of the AVID program at the High School Level. (Under the direction of Dr. Lance Fusarelli).

The Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program is intended to deliver approaches that empower minority students to attend two/four year colleges. Research specifies that the achievement of the students enrolled in AVID is contingent on meticulous adherence to the AVID components. Although AVID is an elementary, middle, and high school program, the program will be looked at only at the high school level. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of leaders when implementing the AVID program in two high schools within the same county.

AVID is a K-12 program with established outcomes; however, the program is quite expensive. Principals have to be prepared to use a teaching spot to staff an AVID position and school districts need to send teachers to be AVID trained. In these challenging economic times, districts are looking to make adjustments. AVID’s effectiveness for students in any particular school is the essential piece that will keep the AVID program as an important component of the budget.

There are eleven essentials found within the AVID program. Some of AVID’s eleven essentials are geared toward instruction. Other essentials are geared toward leadership, such as staffing and student selection and still other essential components that are less tangible. This study focused on the essentials that are leadership based and on other essential components that are less tangible. A comparative case study methodology was used to look at the different methods of the implementation of the AVID program at two high schools within the same county. The research was conducted through observations of AVID site
teams, and semi-formal structured interview questions with AVID leaders and AVID coordinators.

This research validated that there are two significant people at every school that are incredibly important to the implementation of the AVID program. The AVID administrator who manages the overall program and the AVID coordinator who directly oversees the program are invaluable personnel when it comes to the implementation of the AVID program. The AVID administrator schedules AVID classes, advocates for AVID within the community, and is a liaison between the building administrator and the AVID coordinator. The AVID coordinator leads the site team, is a liaison between all the AVID teachers, provides staff development regarding AVID methods, and oversees the certification and data collection. During this research I found that the AVID administrators in both schools recognized, and understood their obligations within the implementation process of the AVID program. In this research one of the AVID administrators was not AVID trained and these individuals should be trained in the eleven essentials of AVID so that the program implementation is according to the AVID guidelines and decisions that deal with the program are based on valid information. The other AVID administrator was also the AVID coordinator for the AVID program, making a job that is meant for two people and is already demanding rather difficult to be accomplished by one person.

In order to get an accurate picture of a program implementation in more than one school, it is important for the implementation procedures to be similar for all schools being studied, which was not the case in this study. Schools within the same county that are implementing the same program must be closely monitored from the district level to be sure that the same or equivalent procedures are occurring within each building; once again this
was not the case for these schools. Administrators involved with the program implementation need to be committed, involved, and understand all areas in order for the implementation to be valuable to all involved.
Leaders Implementation of the AVID program at the High School Level

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Leadership

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several people whose love and support have helped me get through this incredible journey:

- Four grandmothers, Beulah, Gladice, Mildred, and Moye whose words and actions taught me to persevere no matter what challenges I might face; giving up was not an option.
- My loving parents, Dr. George and Betty, whose words of encouragement were always there when I needed them.
- My mother and father-law, Ed and Edna, also known as my second set of parents. Their unconditional support with my studies was outstanding. Thank you for believing in me.
- My wonderful and amazing children Kevin, Melissa, Paula, and Chris for your constant support and encouraging words.
- My grandchildren Alexya Serenity and Jesse Toby who are a breath of fresh air and who teach me something new every time I see them. I love you two more than you will ever know. Jesse whose love, encouragement and sacrifices during the challenges of graduate school and life made this dream come true. I love you!
Denise was born to George and Betty. She and her three sisters, Joy, Missy, and Jessica, spent their childhood in South America. Denise married Jesse on April 4 and while married received her bachelor's with a major in Secondary English Education and a minor in Spanish and she received her master's in Administration. Denise has two children, Kevin and Paula and two other children that married into the family, Melissa and Chris.
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Both sets of parents, George and Betty and Ed and Edna were instrumental in this phenomenal success. I am blessed to have two sets of parents that have always shown me love and encouragement. Their love and support were a constant presence throughout this journey.

I would like to thank all the committee members as well as Dr. Lance Fusarelli for helping me with this endeavor. He provided the support, guidance, and inspiration that I desperately needed. Dr. Gregory Hicks’ way of making me feel at ease through my internship was awesome; I also appreciate all the help provided by all members on the committee and I can’t forget to mention my mentor. He was there every step of the way with his patience, insight, encouragement, and words of wisdom. He was an awesome mentor! Of course, it is understood that there were other family, friends and co-workers that deserve a great big thanks - you know who you are! Without them I could not have finished this assignment. Thanks for the encouragement and support!
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Mary Catherine Swanson developed the Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program in 1980 to help low-income and low-achieving high school students do well academically and eventually attend four-year colleges. Swanson believed that students had the potential to succeed if they were offered a rigorous curriculum and the support to reach their potential. She also believed that positive relationships with these young adults, organizational frameworks, and high expectations for students were the keys to a college education for many students at the high school level, many of which would not have believed that higher education was a possibility. Swanson believed that hard work, stick-to-itiveness, and determination would empower such students to attain academic success.

In the early stages of the AVID program students were taken from general education classes into more rigorous classes and provided with techniques in order for them to be academically successful (AVID Center, 2013). Organizational skills and a note-taking system were taught to help students prepare for tests. Students were trained to ask questions that would help them understand material taught in all classrooms in order for them to be successful in all areas of schooling.

AVID started in a school where teachers did not have high ambitions for their students and grew into a program implemented in 5700 schools in 46 states and 16 countries, impacting over 1.5 million students all over the world (AVID Center, 2017). Two qualitative studies that reveal the performance of the AVID students’ success compared to the performance of the non-AVID students were closing the Gaps: The Relevance of
**AVID’s Post-Secondary System to the Current Needs of American Higher Education** by Joseph Cuseo (2012), and **An Examination of AVID Graduates’ College Preparation and Postsecondary Progress: Community College Versus 4-Year University Students** by Karen Watt, Patricia Reyes and Jeffery Huerta (2013). These studies found that AVID students were taught study skills and were offered the support that was needed in order to outperform the non-AVID students to a significant degree.

The following eleven AVID program essentials are regarded as imperative to high school students’ success.

- Student Selection
- Voluntary Participation
- Full Implementation
- University Curriculum
- Writing and Reading Curriculum
- Inquiry
- Collaboration
- Trained Tutors
- Data Collection and Analysis
- District and School Commitment
- Interdisciplinary Site Team

According to the AVID Awareness participant materials (2013), each of these components requires a level of commitment on the part of the students and the adults associated with the AVID program. These essential components are established in order for the AVID students to gain as much success as possible. The implementation of AVID...
requires a strong commitment from each school district. AVID students are more likely to take rigorous courses found within the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs than students who are not in AVID and plan on going to college.

A majority of high school dropouts are members of disadvantaged minority groups (Swanson, 2009). Most AVID students are members of a minority group. About 50 percent are Hispanic, nearly 19 percent are African American, and 65.5 percent qualify for free or reduced lunch (AVID, 2014). Baum andPayea (2013) discovered that a four-year degree can result in a $20,000 higher salary than someone with only a high school diploma. Not only does a higher salary come with a college degree but also health care, stability, and other elements that allow for a comfortable lifestyle.

Because higher education has benefits, actions must be taken to improve the low graduation rates and assist students with their learning potential. To target these areas a program was developed by Mary Catherine Swanson in order to recognize and help students from the "forgotten majority" (Swanson, 2009). The AVID program was developed just for the kind of student that has the potential and the desire to be successful within the classroom but has no support.

Statement of the Problem

John Dewey stated in his 1916 publication *Democracy and Education* that the key to democracy is education. So, as we prepare our high school students to go to college, it is necessary that this generation of students be provided with techniques that will help them become contributing members of our society. AVID is a program that provides support for high school students that have the potential for college but do not have the academic support system needed for one reason or another.
AVID is a program run by the AVID Center in San Diego with demonstrated results; however, it is costly. Principals have to be willing to use a teaching position to staff the AVID coordinator/teacher position, plus school districts have to employ tutors for the two times a week tutorial sessions.

Implementing AVID with the belief that AVID’s eleven program essentials is the foundation for student’s success is found in a study conducted by Black, Little, McCoach, Purcell, and Siegle (2008). This mixed methods evaluation of the AVID program’s implementation found more success when teachers were consistent with the implementation of the AVID methodology (Black et al., 2008).

Some of AVID’s 11 essentials are instructionally based, such as Cornell Notes and WICOR, which are part of the writing and reading AVID curriculum, directly impacting what occurs within the walls of the classroom. Others are more leadership-based, such as staffing and policies for student selection. Yet a third set consists of things that are less tangible but still have a great impact on AVID, such as the perception of AVID students by peers, the perception of AVID students by the school community in general, and the understanding and the oversight of the program within the school building.

This study intended to focus on the essentials which were leadership based as well as those which were less tangible such as the communication of the AVID’s mission to the staff and student, the staff development for AVID personnel, and the promotion of the AVID program to the community.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in implementation of the AVID program in two different high schools within the same district, with specific attention
played to the role of the school’s AVID administration in effective program implementation. When looking at the AVID program in two high schools within the same district, this study focused on what aspects regarding the program implementation explain some of the differences within the two high schools. One of the high schools has used the AVID program for eleven years and the other high school is going on their fifth year of implementing the AVID program.

Because this study dealt with the implementation portion of the AVID program, the following areas were addressed in this study:

○ Administrative leadership and support

○ School Wide Implementation

**Research Question**

This study focused on the different aspects of the program implementation and explained the effectiveness of the AVID program found in two high schools within the same county. The following research question with two sub questions was examined in this study:

What are the differences in the implementation of the AVID program in the two chosen high schools with regard to

1. AVID administration’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement

2. AVID teacher/coordinator’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement

**Significance of the Study**

Allegiance to all AVID components differs between sites, even within school districts. School districts provide funding for AVID, but school leaders decide where the
funding goes within their buildings. There is limited research regarding the AVID program on the implementation fidelity and on the role of leadership in program implementation. Understanding of the AVID program enables building administrators to supervise the implementation and clearly grasp the significance of the program.

This comparative case study methodology examined the relationship between the administrators’ understanding of the program, commitment to the program, and level of involvement in the program. This case study will not generate data that will be able to make definitive determinations, but the depth of information provided by this methodology will allow theories to be developed about the connection between the administrators’ knowledge of the AVID program and the technique in which the program is implemented.

**Definition of Terms**

*AVID* - Advancement via Individual Determination is a program which began in the San Diego City Schools in 1980 and is intended to provide academic strategies and organizational skills to afford minority students the opportunity to go to college.

*AVID Components* - The elements of the AVID program are the mission statement, the student profile, the program essentials, the ten guiding principles, and the set of instructional strategies.

*AVID Program Essentials* - Eleven elements that are crucial to the success of each student.

*AVID Student Profile* - Criteria for selecting students into the AVID Program.

*AVID Tutorials* - Trained tutors serve as helpers in the elective classroom.

*College Preparatory Courses* - Courses taken by students headed to college.
Core Classes – English, math, science, and history classes that are required for high school graduation.

Cornell Notes - Note taking method used to help students prepare for assessments.

Interdisciplinary Site Team – The AVID team in a building comprised of members from multiple disciplines.

Socratic Seminar - Session where students bring a question to the class and a group of students discuss the question using critical thinking skills.

WICOR - A set of instructional strategies. W is for writing, I is for the inquiry, C is for collaborative, and R is for reading.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

According to Creswell (2007) for any given research there are underlying limitations and delimitations. Some limitations found within this study included the school district studied was a small district with restricted financial resources. Also, the student demographics in this particular district did not always lend itself to the selection of the “perfect AVID student”. Many times, students may not qualify in all AVID areas.

This study contains delimitations, which are characteristics that limit and define the boundaries of the study (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). The two high schools chosen for this study were different in student population numbers and in the type of student population. These were the only two schools in the county that qualified for this study because I work at the third high school. I did not want information about the third school to be thought of as bias information, adding absolutely no substance to my research. Delimitation to the current study was that only two high school programs were examined, but as referenced earlier it is a
small county with only three high schools and the researcher was interested in the AVID program within this particular county.

So, although the study provided a depth of information that a qualitative study offers, the sample was limited to two high schools. These results were not generalizable to other settings, although they may provide insight into other AVID programs at other schools.

**Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study, statement of the problem and its significance, the research question, definition of terms, limitations and delimitations of the study, and an overview of the dissertation. Chapter 2 contains a review of literature relating to the AVID program, student selection, and elements that are essential to the program and student success. Chapter 3 describes the methodology for conducting the study and the steps that were taken to complete the study. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the findings of the study. Chapter 5 is a summary of the dissertation, an interpretation of the findings, and the conclusions that can be drawn as a result of what was learned in the course of the study.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The AVID program was selected for this study because of my knowledge and experience with the program and my belief in the fundamental aspects of the AVID program. This chapter examines and describes the historical aspects of the AVID program, its components, the essential pieces to the program, and the AVID curriculum, as well as the program’s implementation in California and Texas, how the AVID program relates to gender and minorities, and the effect AVID administrators have on AVID within the school building. The literature review concludes with an analysis of research on program implementation.

The History of AVID

In 1954, the constitutional rights of many students were being violated. In that same year, the United States Supreme Court made a decision that no longer allowed students to be educated in segregated schools; it became well known as Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka. This verdict led to harsh, racial, cultural, and financial tensions (Freedman, 2000).

Clairemont High School was one of the schools in the County of San Diego that was affected by the desegregation order in September of 1980. Its demographics changed drastically; it went from 95% white to 38% minority in a short time frame. It didn’t take long for the teachers at Clairemont High to quickly recognize that their complete approach to instruction was going to need to be modified even though they had experienced excellent tests scores; the need for change was urgent. A majority of the classes that they taught were college preparatory classes. However, the observation of the teachers concerning their new
students was that this once lofty instructional goal would no longer be attainable, but two of Clairemont’s teachers, Mary Catherine Swanson and her mentor, Jim Grove, understood that educating all students was something needed in order for education to benefit all public school students (Freedman, 2000).

In order for the AVID Program to be successful it is necessary for it to be looked at as a policy implementation, which is many times incredibly challenging and expensive. AVID is one of many enhancement programs available to students in many public schools; however not all school districts are able to implement the AVID program.

**The Launching of AVID**

In 1980 Swanson created AVID as a reform providing support to low income and low achieving minority students, helping them to do well academically and eventually be successful in a four or two-year college. This program placed students from general education classes into more rigorous classes and presented them with a system that would enable them to be academically successful (Watt, Yanez, & Cossio, 2003).

Catherine Swanson and Jim Grove understood that education is everyone’s responsibility. They knew that the more education a student received the more opportunities he/she would encounter. They were also aware that the doors to opportunity are not always equitably open to all. These two teachers were quite aware that it was the outcome of combined efforts of teachers who employed best teaching practices, the influence of the surrounding culture shaping the students’ lives was something that would be well worth the time and effort anyone was willing to give (Nelson, 2010). Swanson and Grove were able to persuade 32 students with diverse backgrounds and with grade point averages that were unacceptable for an average college student to become part of the AVID program. These
students agreed to take on the responsibilities of a schedule that would require more academic time on their part (AVID Center, 2013). These students succeeded and caught the attention of the school, the district, and eventually, the state of California. Even though Clairemont was one of the smallest schools in the San Diego district it graduated the first group of AVID students in 1984 and it had become one of the top three feeder schools to the University of California. The school also was ranked the fourth high school out of 17 district high schools that enrolled graduates in schools for higher education (Cuseo, 2012). AVID is now being implemented in 4900 schools in 46 states and 16 countries, not to mention impacting over 700,000 students all over the world (AVID Center, 2013).

AVID Components

The 2013 AVID: In Pursuit of Success Participant Handbook states that AVID’s program has valuable components that are expected to be followed in order for the program to be successful. The components are an AVID mission statement, a list of the eleven AVID essentials, specific guidelines for team representation, and a detailed AVID curriculum. The proper implementation and the strict adherence to AVID’s components are found to be the key to a successful AVID program.

AVID Mission Statement

The AVID Center (2013) not only records the following as the AVID Mission statement but also details how the AVID program can be implemented. AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society by:

- Developing students as readers and writers
- Teaching specific strategies for critical thinking and higher-level inquiry
● Providing support, so students can meet high expectations
● Influencing the belief system, culture and instructional strategies of a campus
● Providing meaningful and motivating professional development

AVID’s methodology is intended to support students and educators as learning and performance are increased for all students.

AVID Student Profile

In AVID awareness participant materials (2007) the Avid Dream Team consisting of Sally Arellanes, Cyndy Bishop, and Jean Castruita stated that certain changes that may be made to the AVID program model in order to adjust to each school’s situation, but there are aspects of the program that should not be changed in order for the program to be successful, which are the eleven program implementation essentials. The 2009 Implementing and Managing the AVID Program Materials publication listed these important and non-negotiable essentials for a successful program to emerge (Contreras, 2009).

Academic Criteria for selection:

● A GPA between 2.0 – 3.5 and tests scores that are average to high.
● Potential to improve in studies for college preparatory classes.
● Have desire and determination.

Students meeting one or more of the following criteria:

● First to attend college
● Historically underserved in four-year colleges
● Low income
● Special circumstances
The profile above is the structure for students who would be possible AVID student candidates; nevertheless, both student and family are expected to follow the guidelines and meet the academic expectations that are explained to them early on in the process. While parents must do their part by agreeing to support their children and having high expectations of their students by signing a contract, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to show that the student wants to improve their academic success. Student names are considered for approval as possible AVID students and Coordinators of the AVID program advise the team to not let one requirement keep a student from being part of the program, but to look at all students holistically (AVID Center, 2013).

Avid Program Essentials

The 2009 AVID Program Materials publication records eleven essentials to the AVID program. As the implementation of the program begins, the commitment of the student and the adults becomes unmistakable. Essential elements of the AVID program are (Contreras, 2009):

- AVID student selection – The criteria listed in the previous section is the method as to how the students are chosen.

- Voluntary Participation - Both students and staff must choose to participate. The curriculum is not effective unless involvement is voluntary. Students need to make the first step at opting to participate in the program. Parents should then be brought into the decision making process as soon as the student has volunteered to be a part of the AVID program. Likewise, teachers should volunteer to be part of the AVID program. Being part of AVID takes time and commitment and if teachers are not doing it voluntarily, then there is sure to be trouble in the future (p. 1).
● Full Implementation - The AVID elective class must be part of the student’s academic day. If AVID is to be effective, it must not be viewed as a supplementary activity. Students need to meet regularly as a group. AVID is meant to become a community, and the stability of regular meetings inspires the development of a support group. It is significant that students have continuous, structured communication with the teacher and the tutors so that problems can be recognized and guided as needed (p. 2).

● University Curriculum - It is the obligation of the AVID teacher to collaborate with the counselor and with the AVID student to arrange a long-term educational plan to meet the goal of college enrollment. While the AVID teacher not only provides tutorial support for the student’s subject area needs, the teacher also offers study methods and time management skills. The AVID teacher also checks assignments and records grades, ensures that tutorial logs are complete, binder organization is correct, college and career awareness is provided, and test taking skills are offered (p. 2).

● Writing and Reading Curriculum - AVID essentials include Cornell note taking, learning logs, letter writing, and essays. Students also receive tutoring in strategies to access difficult curriculum. The three factors that are most helpful for insuring successful comprehension for students include connecting to prior knowledge through the use of during and after reading strategies, and understanding text structure (p. 3).

● Inquiry - Students learn how to develop critical thinking skills for their Cornell Notes and for their tutorial groups. The Socratic Method is used throughout the program. This helps students engage in intelligent debates; it is also used as a tool for learning (p. 3).
Collaboration - Through teachers and/or tutors, students are taught to work in groups and to take responsibility for their own learning. They are taught to use their notes to communicate what they have learned and what they hope to do next time they meet (p. 3).

Tutors - Tutors use the AVID approaches to clarify students’ questions or concerns. Tutors need to be people that the students respect and can also relate to at all times. Many times, tutors are college students, retired teachers, or former AVID students. The effectiveness and significance of the exceptional connection among students and their tutors cannot be overrated. The tutor: student ratio that has shown to work is 1:7 (p. 4).

Data Collection and Analysis - All student performance data should be collected and analyzed from the beginning until the end. It is important to communicate the success in AVID in order for the continued improvement and success of the program (p. 4).

District and School Commitment - Program implementation is most effective when the team, a counselor and a core subject area teacher, attends the Summer Institute and agrees to support the program. It is also necessary that resources be identified early on for financial reasons. Ongoing staff development and workshops, methodology training, and conferences for AVID participants will help the adults with the challenges they may face (p. 5).

Active and Interdisciplinary Site Team - The AVID site team should include the AVID teacher, the academic lead teachers, a counselor, and a site administrator. This team develops a plan and documents evidence to illustrate support of students’ success within the curriculum. The team also needs to meet as needed to assess the
students’ needs and to plan for ways to address those needs. The team should also set goals to implement AVID strategies and to create a school culture which fosters and supports the AVID charge (Contreras, 2009).

Just as AVID may not be appropriate for every school; it is not meant for every student. Students and their families must commit to certain guidelines and criteria because the demands of the AVID program require that family, school, and student are in constant communication. One of the keys to a successful AVID program is selecting the right students to participate. These students must have the academic potential to succeed and must also be able to adhere to the demands of the program (Swanson, Contreras, Cota, Furgerson, & Gira, 2009).

**The AVID Team**

There are always different levels of accountability with the implementation of any program. The district director acts as a liaison between the district and the AVID Center for certification purposes. This person is responsible for setting up staff development opportunities, for gathering data and research information, and for coordinating the outreach aspects of the program, while also acquiring tutors from colleges and businesses (AVID; In Pursuit of Success, Dream Big: AVID Awareness Participant Materials, 2013).

The other level is at the school site. Each site has a coordinator who also serves as a teacher. This person is in charge of putting together a site team comprised of teachers. This site team is a means of checking the effectiveness of the AVID program at that particular sight (AVID; In Pursuit of Success, Dream Big: AVID Awareness Participant Materials, 2013).

Implementation of the AVID program in a school system usually begins with core
subject teachers, an AVID coordinator, counselors, and administrators (considered the site team) attending an AVID Summer Institute, usually lasting about one week. Within this team everyone has a specific role. During this week long institute each day there are different sessions that each group needs to attend, then they meet in the evening to share information. Once the team has successfully completed the week-long institute they get together each month to talk about AVID implementation within the school and techniques to use for the instructional strategies that are essential to the program and possibly plan field trips to colleges. This team implements the necessary strategies that are required for renewal of the school’s certification, accepts the responsibility to arrange and supervise AVID events and projects, and helps with the recruitment process (AVID; Decades of College Dreams, 2007, pp.19-21).

Through closer examination of the AVID program it becomes clear that the role of the teacher, school, district, and student become evident and powerful through the instructive methods used during the program. The implementation of AVID involves individuals with different levels of responsibility as explained below:

- The district director has the responsibility for organizing staff development, for affording technical support to AVID sites, for data collection, and for publicity. This person also arranges for partnerships with local agencies and post-secondary institutions to provide tutors, and assists with student enrollment. Finally, this person is responsible for making sure that the certification for all students is up-to-date and any conferences that need to be attended are attended (AVID: Decades of College Dreams, 2007, p. 13).

- The administrator is the person who helps the site team, and is responsible for the
implementation of the eleven AVID essentials. This person must make certain that AVID students are allowed to enroll in challenging courses (AVID; Decades of College Dreams, 2007, p. 20). The administrator must also make sure that financial support is available, while also providing emotional support for the parents, community, and AVID teachers (AVID: In Pursuit of Success, 2013).

- The Counselor’s role is to help students with their course selection, to help students see the benefits of staying enrolled in the program by helping them find avenues to aid them with their challenges, and to keep parents involved with the progress of their child. A counselor is one who will give attention to the whole child’s dilemma; quick decisions must not be made when it comes to removing a student from a class.

- The AVID teacher/coordinator is expected to lead and coordinate monthly AVID meetings. This person takes care of data collection, certificate information, recruitment, and field trips for parents and students. This person tries to make sure a bond is forming among the AVID staff, for the successful implementation of the program and for the success of the students. The Avid classroom is a relaxed environment where students are encouraged to achieve their highest potential. The participant handbook mentioned a study where the nurturing of students and the personal bonds formed with students were key to continuing the program. The study found that a positive bond between teachers and students is important to the success of each individual student. The backbone of the AVID program is the lead teacher/coordinator (AVID: In Pursuit of Success, 2013).

**AVID Strategies**

Another hallmark of AVID that accounts for its effectiveness is a strong classroom
curriculum. There are three elements involved with the classroom aspect that are pertinent to
the success of every AVID student:

- The activities within the classroom are many and are focused on accomplishing the
  students’ academic goals. The AVID elective class is where students meet for one
  period daily. This class tackles key elements in college preparation, such as academic
  survival skills, college entry skills, tutorials, motivation activities, and career and
  college exploration. The AVID curriculum is founded on rigorous standards. It
  incorporates the WICOR method. The “W” stands for writing. The AVID note-taking
  system is an adaptation of the sophisticated Cornell system where students take
detailed notes from class lectures and texts in a wide margin and develops clarifying
ideas or questions regarding those notes in the left margin. The “I” stands for inquiry.
This process teaches students to think for themselves, instead of chasing after the
right answer. The “C” stands for the collaborative approach. At this step, students
work together to achieve educational success through study groups, group projects,
tutorials, and other assignments that require teamwork. The “O” stands for
organization. Students are required to use binders and other kinds of materials that
will help them remain organized throughout their AVID experience. The “R” stands for
reading. The reading component emphasizes critical reading in order to maximize
reading comprehension skills for all students involved (AVID: In Pursuit of Success,
2013).

- Requirement that students take college preparatory courses - Advanced classes help
  students meet their college requirements. Students in AVID are required to take
demanding courses that will prepare them for college. Many of these students have
never taken such difficult courses and in order to be successful the AVID program provides them with academic instruction and support for eligibility to colleges and universities. It gives students college level entry skills, while also increasing their coping skills. The program also attempts to increase their level of college career awareness and motivates them to seek these specific levels of education (Contreras, 2009).

- The stipulation of a continuing educational and social support system - Teachers, tutors, coordinators, and counselors take their roles as nurturers and advocates for AVID students seriously. Beyond academic achievement for the AVID student, there must be a culture that supports high expectations and high levels of achievement for all students. Success for the AVID student requires strong commitment from everyone (AVID Center, 2013).

**Gender, Minorities, and AVID**

AVID is a tool that can help narrow the gap between groups of students that have historically “chosen” not go to college or not finish college. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) states that among white students in a four-year college, 60% graduate within 6 years, while only 49% of Hispanics, 40% of African Americans, and 38% of Native Americans graduate. Among America’s young adults almost 50% of white students have earned an associate degree or higher, while less than 30% of African Americans and less than 20% of Hispanics have earned an associate degree. AVID can supply the students who do not know the way to success with a plan, encouragement, ability, and support needed to succeed (Cuseo, 2012).

AVID has demonstrated to be one of the most successful ways to enhance the
probability that an adolescent who comes from a low-income family will graduate from high school and go on to further his/her education. The AVID Center’s Executive Director, Jim Nelson, stated that "AVID pushes a student to higher levels, then provides them the support to succeed." In 1989 at Ramana High School in Riverside California the AVID program began by offering one AVID class. In 2005, Ramana High School offered 17 AVID classes (542 students) and all of them were accepted into four year colleges. The student population had also changed from predominantly upper middle class to now consisting of 30 percent white, 60 percent Hispanic, 8 percent black, and 2 percent other races (Nelson, 2007).

Oswald and Austin Independent School District (2002) evaluated the program in the Austin Independent School District where data were collected from 1999-2002. The data results came from surveys where 67% of the students returned them and 34% of the parents returned their surveys. Oswald and the Austin Independent School District (2002) documented that frequently more females than males registered in the AVID program. The likely explanation was that students make a decision independently to enroll, and that females were more apt to do it. Something else that was noticed was that good behavior and good attendance is a requirement of AVID and more girls seem to fit that mold than boys. Finally, girls at this age may be more receptive to the added workload necessary in order to be part of the AVID program (Oswald & Austin Independent School District, 2002).

Another study, a rather large study, tested the hypothesis that there is a connection between parental support and vocational choices. Diemer (2007) investigated what influenced the career opportunities minority students and those students considered economically disadvantaged chose for themselves. This study involved over 1000 schools, and focused on the relationship among parental support and career choices. It discovered that
African American students don’t always live with people who strongly encourage them to obtain a higher education. AVID is a unique program that can provide a chance to students who never dreamed that college was ever an option for them (Diemer, 2007).

**AVID’s Effect**

AVID is a widespread teacher and student support structure. Each year data is collected from participating AVID schools and used to comprehend the impact of the AVID program as well as challenges met as AVID becomes established at schools and colleges all over the country. AVID represents a chosen set of students whose high school experiences will help prepare them for post-secondary education and the world of work. The “AVID Effect” in this document will refer to a school-wide change as a result of the implementation of AVID. AVID directly impacts the AVID student but also has a positive outcome on the rest of the student population. During the 2005-06 school year, the AVID Center collected data from 96% of the schools across the country offering the AVID program. The ethnicity data of students that were involved in the program were 49.2% were Hispanic, 21.4% were Caucasian, 18.8% were African American and 7.5% were Asian (Johnston, 2006).

In Texas, this has been seen with better attendance as well as better scores on the state standardized tests (Watt et. al., 2006). In addition, Watt, Huerta, and Cossio (2011) found that AVID had an effect on Texas high schools where the enrollment of Advanced Placement courses was much higher than in the schools where the AVID methodology was not present. Guthrie and Guthrie’s AVID Best Practices Study (2002) discovered that teachers who did not teach AVID students utilized some AVID methodologies in their classrooms, such as Cornell Notes, inquiry, and the collaborative approach. Guthrie and Guthrie (2002) also acknowledged that using the AVID style in other classrooms impacted
teaching and learning throughout the whole school and offered more students AVID support.

A principal, Ed West, from Free State High School in Lawrence, Kansa stated that AVID had exceeded his expectations. Watching the AVID students become more mature and focused on a brighter future was incredibly satisfying. He stated that the school had found the AVID approach so worthwhile that the implementation of the eleven essential elements were being used throughout the school (AVID Information Sheet, 2013).

Attendance

School attendance is a fundamental part of a student’s achievement in school. If students are not in school, they cannot learn. The three studies concerning AVID and school attendance involved implementing AVID and its positive impact on student attendance. A better attendance rate affects a school district’s funds because federal and state funding is frequently based on daily attendance.

In one of the studies (Watt et al 2004) ten high schools that were implementing AVID in Texas were scrutinized. Researchers discovered that in 1999-2000, the attendance rate for AVID students surpassed the attendance of all other students in Texas high schools. In 2000-2001 and 2001-2002, the attendance of AVID students remained higher than the non-AVID population and it actually exhibited an increase after a year of having AVID within the school. This “effect” has been found in several recent studies (Watt, Powell, Mendiola, & Cossio, 2006).

Also, Franklin (2011) performed a study on the correlation of AVID and instruction with attendance being one of the features taken into consideration. From the 77 public high schools in Texas attendance rates of AVID students were found to be higher than the attendance rates of non-AVID students in this study. An interesting fact amid the readings
about school attendance is that low socioeconomic status (SES) students are missing school more often than students with a higher SES, thus generating an even larger disadvantage (Ready, 2010). Therefore, AVID may be a mechanism through which schools leverage the attendance rates of low SES students.

AVID seems to have a positive influence on school attendance within the AVID group. The studies that examine the part AVID plays in attendance imply that the program can involve the attendance of the whole student body. The implications of this discovery suggest that AVID can be used as an intervention instrument in schools who ordinarily have lower attendance rates.

*School Climate*

It is important to consider how the climate can affect the school as a whole. Danielson (2007) stated that the roles of modern principals are so demanding that teacher leadership must be fostered and nourished for a school to be successful in improving student achievement. By administrators supporting teacher leadership and helping teachers develop the skills required to act as leaders, improvement will be seen within the social and academic components of the school.

Creemers and Reezigt (2005) presented the fact that any restructuring effort and its impact on the organization can only be effective if the school culture changes. It is vital that the culture and climate support the involvement of all stakeholders involved in the change initiatives. Weissbourd (2003) confirmed that the most significant facet of all school culture and climate concerns is the students’ accomplishments; the teachers are the best source for this. AVID may be the tool for achieving a culture and climate through supportive teacher leaders.
Victor Vroom’s expectancy theory was created to investigate motivation within the workplace, but is very applicable to the educational field. The basic premise behind Vroom’s expectancy theory is that individuals will be encouraged to learn because they trust that their choice will lead to their ideal result. Students’ motivation for learning has long been deemed an imperative aspect in the academic performance of each individual. According to Vroom’s expectancy theory, if students expect good things from themselves, they will more often than not work diligently to achieve those expectations (Vroom, 1964).

Teachers can increase a student’s expectancy by exposing the student to rigorous curriculum, providing the support needed, having high expectations and helping students believe in themselves, while also providing additional guided learning (Barnes-Robinson, Jeweler, Shevitz, & Weinfield, 2003). All of the above practices are encouraged within the AVID program causing the expectancy theory to become a vital part of the students’ success in the academic world.

It is important that teachers help their students to believe that they can succeed in the academic arena. Educators have the capability to influence students in more ways than one. Their influence will either hinder or encourage a student’s attitude toward education, depending on the manner that they choose to use when nurturing each individual. Consequently, motivating students to do their best academic work depends on educators helping students set high standards for themselves as well as helping students realize that with every choice comes a reward or a penalty.

If America would like to rise again as a leader in the world of education, the academic success of all students must once again become a priority. Vroom’s 1964
Expectancy Theory corroborates that the individuals have to believe in themselves or think that the opportunity to achieve their goal is achievable (Fang, 2008). The reasoning is not for instructors to create students that can learn, but it is for the teachers to help the students to believe in themselves and make the most of each skill that has not been discovered. Teachers can assist them in believing that they can learn. Vroom’s 1964 Expectancy Theory declares that if a student is provided the opportunity to believe in themselves more than likely they will be successful. Wiseman and Hunt describe a successful teacher as one who is proficient at motivating “students or establish environments in which motivated students are the end result” (Wiseman & Hunt, 2001, p. 10). The teacher is a crucial feature; this individual needs to be someone who believes the students can make a difference. There are so many students that have the intellectual ability but not the support they desperately need. I anticipate that the AVID training/program will help diminish the achievement, expectation, and opportunity gaps that exist for many students.

**Criticisms of AVID**

As with any educational initiative, AVID has both supporters and critics. There is no doubt the AVID program requires a tremendous commitment from a school district. Many educators may feel the benefits of AVID do not outweigh the financial costs. It is up to the local district to determine whether the benefits of the program are worth the additional demands placed on the school system.

The first and foremost criticism of AVID is that of program costs; for example, the Orange County School System in North Carolina budgeted an expenditure of $25,000 for the AVID program during the 2008-2009 school year (Orange County Schools, 2008-2009). Although AVID training sessions provide information to administrators and principals on
how to locate funding and support, a financial burden is still placed on each individual school to fund money for the two most expensive aspects of the AVID program (tutors and field trips) which are not optional.

Another problem with the implementation of AVID in the public schools is the issue of scheduling. The AVID Center states that a school must provide at least one section of AVID for students throughout the school year. AVID students are also required to take at least one higher level core curriculum course each year creating a problem for students who take more than one elective during a semester. Sometimes this creates a problem for the Arts and Vocational Classes, since these classes rely on numbers of students in order to remain in existence. This raises issues of micro politics within schools as stakeholders compete for resources and for students.

Another criticism about the program includes the difficulty many schools have in obtaining college tutors which is an essential part of AVID. In many school districts, it is not practical to ask college tutors to come to the school to tutor for an hour or so for volunteer hours or for minimal pay.

As with any program striving to get government funds or other resources, AVID must constantly demonstrate success. The AVID Center offers numerous examples of in-depth studies of the AVID program and the way it has been implemented, including its success in several educational environments.

The team of Larry F. Guthrie and Grace Pung Guthrie of the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Training in Education was hired by the AVID Center to conduct research regarding many aspects of the AVID program. A study that this team conducted conveyed qualitative information concerning AVID was *The Magnificent Eight: AVID Best Practices*
Study-Final Report. It listed the best practices of eight educational organizations and the approaches they used to ease the implementation process of the program. The make-up of this study was to pinpoint eight high performing AVID schools and implement qualitative research on their best practices (Guthrie and Guthrie, 2002). This study used observations, interviews, and other qualitative techniques in order to see if the eleven essentials were implemented and how closely were they followed. Most of the studies report quantitative data because the funding sources rely heavily on numerical data in order to gain funding.

Another critique that may be made concerning these studies is whether the positive results are due to the AVID program, or rather to the techniques, such as small class size and test taking strategies provided for AVID students. In addition to this study, other research articles have been published discussing the positive and negatives of the AVID program. Because of these difficulties, many school systems are not prepared to designate funds, time, and effort required to successfully implement the program. While the AVID program has been proven to be a successful program, it is not without its critics.

Research on Program Implementation

Creating a context that supports change may be the most critical strategy for successful implementation of a program. It involves more than just deciding to implement a program or change the curriculum. Improving schools involves change and that is not an isolated process. Before putting a successful program implementation into practice, needs, commitment, and resources should be assessed.

According to Hall and Hord (2011), successful implementations reflect on their practices and the outcomes on student performance while implementation is occurring. Not only are assessments and reflections needed throughout the implementation process, but
when implementing a program successfully, administrative support and a shared vision are noteworthy elements.

Every successful program depends on strong administrative support. Administrative support is important because, decisions about implementing a program are normally made at the administrative level. Even after a program is implemented, administrators can make or break a program depending on their abilities to lead and influence other people and to express the vision of the program. The failure to generate excitement amid all of the key players involved in implementing a new program can weaken even the best plans. Administrators also have the power to distribute resources and make structural changes that can facilitate the success of a program. Support, teamwork, encouragement, communication, and problem solving skills throughout the implementation of the program are all necessary in order for success to occur (Laureate Education, Inc., 2011).

Having strong leadership is vital in implementing AVID school wide, and it starts with the administration. Knowing whether a program was implemented appropriately permits researchers to better understand the relationship between the program and observed outcomes (Durlak, 1998).

Evaluations too often focus solely on program outcomes without considering how the program and its components actually produced the observed results. Assessing implementation increases the quality of evaluation findings because it provides insights into how programs work and why they succeed or fail, rather than just focusing on outcomes (Chen, 1998). Existing research supports the case for assessing implementation when evaluating programs and interventions. Findings suggest that implementation influences program outcomes (Dusenbury, et al., 2003).
Administrators know the importance and necessity of evaluating a program. A big
demand for administrators is to implement new programs when the real-world version is
different than the paper based handbooks that are provided.

In order to make sure AVID is implemented with fidelity sites are required to
complete the Certification Study (CSS) which is an extensive documentation process that
focuses on the implementation of the eleven essentials. The fidelity check is concluded with
a site visit by AVID program specialists (AVID Center, 2013). Program implementation
fidelity has been described as

...programs that are packaged so as to simplify the task of implementation are
more likely to be viewed as having a potential to be effective...Programs
implemented as part of research or demonstration projects usually receive
considerable support and direction to achieve fidelity of implementation.
Outside of research, implementation usually takes place in less than ideal
circumstances. Not only is fidelity expected to not be maintained, verifying
the degree of fidelity becomes particularly challenging.” (Dusenbury,

Meaning that if AVID is implemented in the way that it is taught at the Summer
Institute, student outcomes will be maximized.

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) provided the AVID program for
1056 students during the 2011-2012 school year. At every grade level, AVID students
outperformed non-AVID students in all subjects on the STAAR end-of-course exams and the
percentage of AVID students scoring a 3 or higher on an AP exam increased during the
2011-2012 school year, clearly indicating that the skills learned in AVID transfer well to
other instructional areas and that AVID strategies may help students who are not enrolled in AVID on their tests performance (Houston Independent School District, 2014).

To help a program succeed, the administrative team must understand how implementation works. This makes it easier for others to navigate the process so that in the end the program will impact student achievement. Research has shown that the components listed below are critical for the successful implementation of any program. (Metz, Blase, & Bowie, 2007).

- Qualified personnel to embrace the new program.
- Training for all staff.
- On the job coaching and mentoring for groups and/or individuals.
- Internal management that establishes structures and processes within the program.
- Development of close community partnerships and the broader organizations.
- Staff and program evaluation.

Effective implementation is as important as components of the program itself. An effective program and an effective implementation will increase the likelihood of a positive outcome.

By design the AVID Program provides and encourages all of the above components through the roles and responsibilities of the AVID teachers, principals, counselor, coordinators, and the site team. According to “AVID: In pursuit of success: Summer Institute Participant Handbook” The AVID Administrative Team is comprised but not limited to the following people and the expectations for each one of them is listed below. The following expectations will be carefully observed throughout this research.

- AVID Teacher/Coordinator
o Sets high expectations for students and monitors their progress.
o Respected instructional leader and has at least 3-5 years of teaching experience.
o Active member of the Site Team and promotes the use of the WICOR strategies in all classes.
o Assist in the training of tutors with AVID training tutorial materials.
o Advocates for AVID students.
o Assists the Site Team with Certification and Data Collection
o Provides professional learning regarding AVID methodologies.
o Provides leadership for the development and maintenance of an active Site Team.
o School Administration
  o Provides encouragement, philosophical and financial support.
o Acts as a liaison with the district administration.
o Active member of the Site Team and has attended a Summer Institute.
o Supports equity and access of all students to rigorous courses.
o Promotes the use of AVID strategies school wide.

Summary

In this chapter, information regarding the history of AVID, the components of the program, the team guidelines and the AVID Curriculum used in the AVID classroom were researched. The underrepresentation of gender and minorities in college preparatory classes as well as the school wide effects of having the AVID program were also examined. This study examines the differences that are found within two high school’s implementation of the
program through the leader’s understanding of the program, their commitment to the program, their level of involvement in monitoring the program. The research finds that AVID students who attend colleges are better prepared to deal with the challenges of college than the non-AVID student; after all, that is what the educational system should be looking for. Imagine how much more a student could be motivated if he or she is taught to believe in his or her possibilities.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine the implementation of the AVID program in two high schools and to dive deeply into the implementation of the AVID program in both schools. The administration in this study is referring to the building administration, the AVID Administrator, and the AVID coordinator, which for this study were some of the members of the AVID team.

Specific Methodological Approach

This dissertation used a comparative case study to discover qualitative data that may be used to acquire an in-depth knowledge of the situation and meaning for those involved. Eight components of the methods were discussed: a) Research Questions, b) Site Selection and Sample Criteria, c) Data Collection, d) Data Analysis, e) Research Validity and Reliability, f) Subjectivity Statement, g) Ethical Issues, and h) Limitations of the Study. This case study explored the similarities and differences within each school’s AVID administration team when preparing students for success. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007) defined sampling as a procedure employed by the researcher to select individuals from a specific population, with the assumption that it is typical of the population. This research was organized with that knowledge in order to understand how the leadership practices of each school influenced the implementation of the AVID process.

According to Yin (2009) a case study is an actual experiment that explores a modern situation in great detail and within its real-life setting. This research study highlights a comparative case study that was designed to examine the leadership practices of the AVID’s administration team when implementing AVID in two schools. Each school is following the
certification process for AVID, as well as supporting AVID’s mission statement which is to equip all students for college and success in a global society. Understanding the effectiveness of the administration’s team within AVID’s eleven program essentials was the objective for this study.

The research strategy of this study was to investigate the work of the AVID Site team as it operated in a real-life context at the school site. In addition, Stake (2000) noticed that a study must be clearly explained, so the researcher and readers have a complete understanding of the case. This research involved data collected by interviews from at least four participants, two from each school; the AVID teacher/Coordinator and the principal. Also, an observation of no more than two AVID site team meetings from each school, and analysis of several documents obtained from the AVID Center were examined in order to understand the implementation process of each school’s AVID program. AVID teachers were purposefully not selected because the researcher felt like it would have been a variety of perceptions instead of knowing the specifics about the implementation process. Teachers are often times quite knowledgeable about the classroom world, but not the larger world that has to be considered before the implementation process within a building can be tackled.

**Research Questions**

The study was driven by one research question with two sub questions:

What are the differences in the implementation of the AVID program in the two chosen high school’s with regard to:

1. The building administrator and the AVID administrator’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement
2. AVID teacher/coordinator’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement

The comparison case study approach was suited to my research question as I attempted to understand how the building administrator, the AVID administrator, the AVID coordinator and how the AVID Site team members helped make each individual AVID program a valuable program within each school. Therefore, a comparative case study was an appropriate methodological design.

**Site Selection and Sample Criteria**

Sampling is an essential step in the qualitative research process. Higginbottom (2004) states that, “In selective sampling, researchers should seek to include people who represent the widest variety of perspectives possible within the range specified by their purpose” (p. 17). This study employed purposive, selective sampling in order to better understand program implementation in each of the two high schools.

In order to begin the study a “Request for Research Application” (Appendix A) was completed and as soon as the researcher received word that the study had been approved from the county and from North Carolina State’s IRB, the principals at both schools were contacted by letter (Appendix B). The form and these letters describe the study. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Each principal received a letter via email requesting permission to interview him/her, the AVID Administrator, the AVID coordinator, and to observe a site team meeting. Once the principal agreed to this study to take place at the school, the researcher contacted the participants via email to see if they would also agree to be part of the study and to schedule a time for the interviews and observations; these interviews were recorded and transcribed. For one of the participants the researcher forgot
the consent form but the participant agreed for the researcher to fax it to the school and it would be signed and faxed back. Also, no more than two observations for each site team was conducted because there was a possibility that not all team members would be present at all site team meetings and actually only one site team meeting was attended by the researcher for each school because of time constraints. Nevertheless, the focus of the study was on the work of the team as a whole and not on any individual team member.

The interviews and observations were examined to study any similarities and differences that might have existed in the program implementation at each school.

**Data Collection**

To protect the identity of individuals and schools and to maintain anonymity, the schools were given the following pseudonyms:

1. Remington High School is in its 5th year of implementing the AVID program, allowing the school to become an AVID Certified School. The school has an average of eight hundred to eight hundred and fifty students in grades nine through twelve. The school’s demographic enrollment averages around fifty-seven percent black, twenty-seven percent white, fifteen percent Hispanics (High-Schools.com).

2. Arrow Smith High School has been implementing the AVID program for eight years. There is an average of one thousand three hundred to one thousand four hundred students in grades nine through twelve (High-Schools.com).

The data collection for this study utilized a variety of methods including individual interviews, site team meeting observations, and document analysis. The researcher conducted all interviews with a semi-structured interview process consisting of pre-set questions and probing questions (Appendices C and D). This afforded the researcher liberty to modify the
order of the questions based on what was appropriate at the time of the interview and also
embrace the probing question technique which was used to encourage participants to clarify
their answers. These questions were emailed to the participants ahead of time so that the
interviewees would be more at ease at the time of the interview. Interviews were structured
with some questions that are specific and some questions that were broad allowing
participants to feel comfortable with the research subject. The interviews occurred at each
individual’s school wherever the interviewee felt most comfortable. The AVID coordinators
interviews lasted from one hour to one hour and a half. The AVID administrator’s interview
and the building administrator’s interview lasted from 45 minutes to one hour. The first
interview was with Mr. Cunningham and he was a devoted AVID coordinator with immense
AVID knowledge and passion for the AVID program who was more than willing to share it
all with the researcher. Because he was the first one the researcher interviewed, the
researcher was better equipped with probing questions for the other interviewees if they did
not provide the needed information. Throughout the study, the researcher found it necessary
to email the AVID Coordinator at Remington High School three times to ask a different
question each time in reference to their AVID program.

Yin (2009) stated that interviews should be “guided conversations rather than
structured queries. In other words, although you will be pursuing a consistent line of inquiry,
your actual stream of questions in a case study interview is likely to be fluid rather than
rigid” (p. 106). Yin (2009) also mentioned that another weakness when interviewing was the
interviewer’s ability to forget pertinent information, which is the reason that the interviews
for this study were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis purpose.
The researcher also included observations into the study. During the Site team observations the researcher assumed a secretarial role during the entire observation by writing comments, reactions, and decisions that were made by the team members. The researcher transferred the hand written notes to a typed bulleted layout version. The observation period lasted about 45 minutes to one hour for each site team.

Finally, a document review was incorporated into this study. The documents were obtained from AVID.org. It provided the researcher with statistics as to the type of students that attended each school. These documents provided the researcher with a picture of the types of students that were part of the AVID program in each school.

This study is set in a small school district on the East Coast of North Carolina. This district has three secondary high schools, but only two will be the focus of this study because I work in the other high school. Each of the school sites were assigned a pseudonym. The researcher is the only one who is aware of the coding system and the coding system key. All research data was kept in a locked cabinet, accessible only by the researcher.

The selection criterion focused on two high schools in the county. One of the high schools is and has been implementing AVID for eight years, and the other high school is in its fifth year of implementing the AVID program. Knowing that both high schools are dealing with the AVID Center means that both schools were being held to the same standards. Based on the training that is offered by the AVID Center more similarities than differences became apparent because the AVID program implements a methodology that is intended to work for all students in all schools. Each school’s participation in this study was voluntary. Everyone who was interviewed (school administrators, and the AVID site team coordinators) are members of the school’s AVID site team.
Data Analysis

Data collection occurred using a variety of methods including interviews, site team meetings, and document analysis. For this study, two secondary schools’ AVID site teams were invited to participate. Yin (2003) described how multiple case studies can be used to either “(a) predict similar results or (b) predict contrasting results” (p. 47). Yin (2003) readily acknowledged that the result of case studies is not generalizable to the public and that their purpose is to “expand and generalize theories” (p. 10). He also made it clear that the case study is “an all-encompassing method” (p. 14) which may have included qualitative and quantitative research. The research does not have to have “direct detailed observations as a source of evidence” (p. 15).

Interviewing in qualitative investigations can be informal or formal (Creswell, 2007). There is no right or wrong answers to the questions. The interviews were used to analyze common themes/patterns that related to the implementation of the AVID program. For this study a semi-structured interview was chosen. The researcher used a set of similar questions for all interviewees, with most of the questions being open-ended. The interviews were conducted for this study and were reviewed. Notes were taken about any ideas that seemed to be reoccurring with participants. The researcher created an Excel spreadsheet to identify the emergent themes. This spreadsheet can only be accessed with a password. As the researcher categorized the themes, the researcher also labeled them. While creating the interview spreadsheet, the researcher decided to not organize the spreadsheet into themes, but into two broad sections dealing with the “AVID Leadership Based Essentials” and “Other Implementation Essentials”. Once the eleven essentials were placed in the appropriate section, the researcher created one column for each school and the answers from the
participants’ interview questions and from there the differences and similarities were documented for each school. After careful consideration, the constant comparative method was selected because as Merriam states:

While case studies can be very quantitative and can test theory, in education they are more likely to be qualitative. A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research (Merriam, 1998, pp.19).

As recommended by Yin (2009) to ensure high-quality, available data, I kept different notebooks for each school site in order to organize documents for data analysis. Instead of using notebooks the researcher found that using folders was easier and more convenient. The folders were used because of the loose papers that came with the transcribing of the observations and interviews, the emailing, the faxing, and the data from AVID.org. Also, to ensure accuracy and secure confidentiality, all notes taken during any observation or interview were recorded and transcribed within twenty-four hours and recognized only by a pseudonym and date.

**Research Validity and Reliability**

Validity and reliability should be considered in all studies. The accuracy, trustworthiness, and integrity of the data depend on careful research. Merriam (1995) mentioned that the primary concern about qualitative research is to make sure that validity and reliability are kept at all times.
As stated by Yin (2009), “The analysis of case study research is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies” (p. 127). The researcher must inspect the answers to the interview questions for patterns, themes, and differences that surfaced when looking at the different implementation process of the AVID program in each of the schools. In other words, Yin (2009) stated that the analysis must pertain to all the data, all explanations must be reviewed, the analysis must deal only with the pertinent components of the research, and the researcher must employ his/her own understanding of the subject matter. Yin (2009) left no doubt that validity and reliability definitely add to the case study research method.

**Subjectivity Statement**

I have always felt that if my parents would have known how to guide me toward pursuing a college degree, I would have been a college graduate much earlier in my life. Getting a college degree was neither encouraged nor discouraged within my household. My dad had a degree in Theology from the Baptist Bible College from Springfield, Missouri. In his late 50’s he received his doctorate degree in theology. My mom, a stay-at-home mom, has always taken classes for one thing or another, but never attained a degree.

I married into a family of teachers. They gently nudged me into going to college and so I did. Later on in my teaching career, I heard about this program that helped students that were not expected to go to college but had the potential, AVID, and quickly became interested in the program. I volunteered to attend a conference in Atlanta, Georgia about 10 years ago so that I could help with the program at the school where I taught. The school where I taught did not do a whole lot with the AVID program, so I did not teach any of the AVID classes, nor do I remember an AVID team coming to fruition, but I taught my students
the AVID curriculum as best I could and saw small strides with my students, so I spoke highly of the AVID program every chance I got and encouraged my students to use these strategies in other classes.

Throughout my pursuit of a Doctorate degree I deliberated on several different avenues of research in dealing with the AVID program, but never once veered from the main focus of my dissertation encompassing the AVID program in some shape, form or fashion. This program is the focus of my dissertation because I see the value that it has for other students that may find themselves in the same situation that I found myself in many years ago. I know that there are so many students that just need the encouragement and the direction in order to be successful.

Throughout this research, I have been a supporter of the procedures used by the AVID program. I am thankful that this program deals with students that before now had not been adequately served by the educational system. Hopefully this study will open doors for future investigations concerning a plethora of implementation methods for the AVID program.

**Ethical Issues**

All of the information gathered and studied was dealt with in confidence for the emotional, monetary, and personal needs of each individual participant. Both case studies were kept confidential and all identifying characteristics were changed. Individual student names were not accessed at any time and any adult that agreed to be part of the research was given a pseudonym. All participants were volunteers from schools in a county within the eastern part of North Carolina. They were required to complete a consent form. This document informed the participants of the goal and how the findings were used at a later
date, as well as advantages and disadvantages to each individual for participating in the study. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality, but were also informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any penalties.

**Limitations of the Study**

As with any qualitative research, this study had limitations. This research was intended to provide a glimpse into the implementation of the AVID program from the leadership perspective. It involved data from two specific high schools and therefore the findings cannot be applied to other populations.

The primary limitation is that only two individual schools were studied in one district. Although the sample size is small, the purpose of this study was to document the impact of the AVID leadership on the implementation of the AVID program at each particular site; therefore, the sample was adequate for this purpose.

Another potential limitation for this study was that the interviews occurred toward the end of the semesters when administrators and teachers were preparing for exams and planning for the next semester and the team observations occurred at the beginning of school when teachers were trying to get themselves ready for the new school year. AVID administrators and teachers were interviewed during a time when they were under pressure. Time for interviewing was limited because time was a precious commodity.

One more limitation is that I work in one of the three high schools within the same county where the research was being done. I purposefully did not include the high school I work at so that no one would say that I was biased when reporting the data. Although the above precaution was adhered to, I am aware that the three high schools are always in
“competition” with each other and there is a possibility that how the information for this study is solicited, recorded, and interpreted could be looked at as flawed.

A final limitation of this study comes from the inexperience of the qualitative researcher. As a graduate student and inexperienced researcher, I am developing sophistication in the use of interviewing skills. The structured questionnaire may create an unnatural setting but because I am a novice at interviewing others, I need this structure and this could be considered a limitation of the study.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to document and explain the research methodology to be used for this study. The researcher also included the rationale for choosing a comparative case study method, the process for choosing the sites involved in the study, the manner in which the data collection was obtained, and the procedure for data analysis. This information was gathered to form a portrait of the AVID implementation process in the two sites being studied, while contributing to the larger knowledge base of the AVID implementation process. This study was created in order to expand the existing research on the AVID program by using qualitative techniques to compare the implementation processes of two AVID high school site teams within the same county found within North Carolina.
CHAPTER IV

STUDY FINDINGS

As stated in chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to examine the difference in implementation of the AVID program in two different high schools within the same district with specific attention to the role of leadership in program implementation.

The research question with two sub questions that guided this study was:

What are the differences in the implementation of the AVID program in the two chosen high schools with regard to:

a. AVID administration’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement
b. AVID teacher/coordinator’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement

For the purpose of this study, the county and both schools were issued a pseudonym, as well as the participants. This chapter provides a detailed description of findings of the study mostly presented in a narrative, qualitative format. The small portion of quantitative data provided is to provide a picture of the type of student population each school holds. The qualitative data is presented to afford some insights into the leadership’s implementation of the AVID program and the school wide implementation of the program.

The following information will be presented in order to clarify the differences in the implementation process of each school:

a. Brief introduction of the county’s AVID Program
b. Description of each school setting and student demographics
c. AVID student data from each school
d. County’s Process for investing in the AVID program
e. Implementation of AVID Essentials

f. Interviews and observation Data

Finally, the research questions developed for this study are addressed according to the interview data provided by the participants, observation, and document analysis.

**Lafayette County and its AVID program**

Lafayette County has approximately 81,000 residents (61% urban and 39% rural). It covers approximately 373 miles, while the City of Lafayette has about 78,000 residents and encompasses an area of about 14 miles (Tax Department, 2016). In Lafayette County AVID is not an optional program at the high school level. All three high schools are required to implement the program. Both high schools involved in this research were given lists from the middle schools as to what students were in the AVID Middle School program, but nevertheless all students had to go through an acceptance process at each high school level. All students entering the AVID High School program must first fit the AVID student criteria and go through an interview in order for the teachers to get a more in-depth understanding of the student. Other than paying for the fee to attend the summer institute, the district provides no specific funding for the AVID program, including teachers or tutoring services; the number of AVID sections offered is at the discretion of the principal. Each principal makes the decision as to how AVID will be implemented within their school.

When the school district personnel develop an interest in the AVID program, the first step is to send school representatives to an AVID Summer Institute, which is what this county did. The seminars within these institutes are held around the country at different times throughout the year. This is where the representatives learn about the general implementation, the expense, and procedures involved with the AVID program. Because the
AVID program is an expensive endeavor, district stakeholders must consider the financial strain and implementation procedures before deciding to move forward with implementing the program.

Once the decision is made to adopt the AVID program, number ten and eleven program essential is addressed in great detail from the district level to the school level, which is the commitment to participate in the AVID program. The school district must make an initial investment of $13,902. This includes the annual AVID membership, the AVID Summer Institute for that year, and the AVID library package. The costs vary according to school and district size (AVID Center, 2013). Along with the fees, a school district coordinator is selected as well as a teacher/site coordinator to administer the AVID program. Once Lafayette County decided to adopt the AVID program, the schools were notified and the selection process for the adults that would be involved in implementing the program at the school level began to take place at the individual schools. The AVID teacher, the AVID coordinator, and an administrator then attend the AVID summer institute. This is a five-day rigorous training session intended to afford educators with the tools needed to successfully implement the AVID program.

**School Settings and Student Demographics**

This section will offer a description and background for the two school sites selected for this study followed by the demographics of the student population, the schools’ overall achievement data and finally details describing the unique AVID site team composition as well as the overall site team focus.

*Remington High School*
The first school is Remington High School. It is located in rural eastern Lafayette County along a main highway. It is within a sixty-minute drive from shopping areas, which provides easy access to many fun activities for students. At the front entrance of Remington High School there is a large statue of the school’s mascot. Upon entering the school, a large open area is provided for the students to gather at different times of the day and to the right of this area is a spacious glassed-in cafeteria where the students also enjoy socializing and eating. This high school graduated its first class in June of 2016. Remington serves around 855 students.

Mrs. Phillips, the principal of Remington High, has been there since the AVID program was implemented. The individual that had served as the AVID teacher/coordinator for the program for three years had to resign suddenly at the end of the school year because of personal issues, leaving Remington in a serious predicament. Remington High School has gone through some transitions with its AVID program, but the principal has been the one constant through these changes. However, the remainder of the staff involved in AVID has changed frequently (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016). The principal, Mrs. Phillips, oversees the AVID program, but the AVID Administrator, Mr. King who is one of the assistant principal’s is now also the AVID Coordinator. He was placed in this position over the summer when the teacher that had been doing it had to resign because of personal issues. Mr. King said that the previous AVID Coordinator still works at the school; with everyone’s help and support his transition into this role was fluid and effortless. He is not new to AVID, but he is new to the position. After accepting the role as the AVID Coordinator, he was offered the opportunity to attend a national AVID Summer Conference. He attended the summer conference this summer for the first time as an administrator and
was glad that he was able to go this summer for some training on the coordinator aspect of the role. Last year was his first year as an Assistant Principal but he was excited and eager to help with the AVID program because he truly believed in it. All teachers involved in AVID at this school have not attended a summer conference but have gone to other AVID trainings within the county (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

*Arrow Smith High School*

Arrow Smith High School is found in yet another rural area of Lafayette County but it is nestled in the western part of the school district. It serves approximately 1400 students in grades 9-12. Arrow Smith is beautifully landscaped which is easily seen as you drive in the driveway. The lawn is well manicured with a large sign with the school’s name on it. At the front entrance of the building there is an open style cafeteria with an open area to the left of it where students congregate at different times of the day. This school has experienced multiple principal changes during three of the years being studied. It is the largest school within Lafayette County. This school graduated its first class in June 2006.

The AVID program in this school has been in existence for eight years. When Mrs. Harington assumed the leadership role in the building, the AVID program was already in existence. Mrs. Harington has kept the program in place since it existed and when she arrived she depended on others in the building, whom had more experience with the program, to keep it running smoothly (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

The previous AVID Coordinator had been at the school for 12 years. Mr. Cunningham said that his coming into this position was rather abrupt but he knew what the position entailed and was ready and willing to tackle it. He has been the AVID Coordinator for the last 4 years. Mr. Cunningham also indicated that all of the AVID teachers had not
attended the AVID summer institute but all had attended some form of AVID training, whether it was a workshop offered within the school or other outside training. As for the AVID team, they are looking to add some new people but since Mrs. Harington arrived at the school, so far, no one has been added to the AVID Site Team (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016)

**AVID Student Data**

Student demographics compiled for both schools from the AVID Center are found in the chart below. Table 1 shows the percentage of the AVID student enrollment within each ethnicity from all grade levels for the last four years at each individual school. This table depicts that the number of students being served by the AVID program at Remington High School remained somewhat constant and at Arrow Smith High School the number of students increased each year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools &amp; Population</th>
<th>Muti Racial</th>
<th>American</th>
<th>African</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remington (845)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1279)</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012-2013 Students Enrolled in AVID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remington (835)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1338)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 also shows the ethnic breakdown of all the AVID students in both high schools with a column listing the total number of students in the school within that ethnicity. When looking at each school’s data separately there is an increase in some of the ethnic groups at both high schools. The increase occurs with the Hispanics and the African American students within all four years. Also apparent is that both schools remained consistent across the board with the American Indian population.

Another interesting point found within the data in the table above is that the demographics for the Hispanics and African American AVID students in both high schools increased during the four years studied for this research. During these four years, the female and male enrollments fluctuated at Arrow Smith while at Remington High School only the female enrollment increased. Also disclosed in this chapter is that the number of AVID students increased at Remington High School but there were no AVID students listed as receiving free or reduced lunches for the 2014-1015 school year.
Table 2 – Grade Level
2011-2012 Students Enrolled in AVID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools Population</th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remington (845)</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1279)</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.07%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2012-2013 Students Enrolled In AVID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remington (835)</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1338)</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2013-2014 Students Enrolled In AVID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remington (827)</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1348)</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014-2015 Students Enrolled In AVID

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>9th Grade</th>
<th>10th Grade</th>
<th>11th Grade</th>
<th>12th Grade</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remington (849)</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith (1361)</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows a grade by grade and gender breakdown of the AVID students in both high schools for the four years being studied. As for the total percentage of AVID students during these four years, it is seen that the female enrollment increased at Remington High School and at Arrow Smith High School the male and female enrollment fluctuated.
Table 3 – Free/Reduced Lunch Chart - AVID Students Free/Reduced Lunch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>2011-2012 # of AVID Students</th>
<th>2012-2013 # of AVID Students</th>
<th>2013-2014 # of AVID Students</th>
<th>2014-2015 # of AVID Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remington</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrow Smith</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 illustrates the percentage of AVID students in each high school that is considered economically disadvantaged. From the chart above, Arrow Smith High School’s numbers fluctuated between within the years that are being studied, while targeting the appropriate students for the AVID program. One interesting fact is that Remington High School increased in student numbers throughout the four years, but had no one who qualified for free or reduced lunch for the 2014-2015 school year.

County Process for Investing in AVID

The first and second AVID program essentials are leadership based. Even though the AVID strategies are beneficial to all students, the AVID student must be one who has chosen to participate in the AVID program in order for the curriculum to be effective. Participation must be voluntary to not only students but also for the staff who are involved with the program. Lafayette County made the decision that the AVID program would be implemented in their middle schools and high schools. Every year during the summer, Lafayette County encourages five people from the AVID site team and administrators to attend the AVID Summer Institute in Philadelphia. The institute fees are paid for by the
county and the county provides a charter bus for the travel to Philadelphia. Throughout the year the county executive director goes to each school periodically checking to see how the AVID program is being implemented. From the site team observation for both of the high schools and interviews with administrators, students that were part of the program and all team members were part of the AVID program on a voluntary basis.

The third AVID program essential is where the school-wide commitment comes into play. The school must be committed to the full implementation of the AVID program, which is having an elective class as part of the regular academic school day. At Remington High School and Arrow Smith High the AVID elective classroom is structured as needed. Both of the AVID administrators indicated that AVID elective classes offered AVID resources by placing the AVID students together in one classroom so that they could work together to recognize each other’s strengths, get assistance with difficult assignments, prepare college applications, and acquire good study skills.

The AVID instructionally based essentials support a weekly AVID classroom agenda as described in Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>AVID Curriculum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>AVID Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Tutorials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Binder Checks, Field Trips, Speakers, and Motivational Activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to this weekly schedule the fourth-sixth AVID instructionally based essentials refer to the strong relevant, writing, and reading curriculum, which involves WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, and Reading), the use of Cornell Notes, and other AVID strategies such as Socratic seminars, philosophical chairs, field trips, and guest speakers. Both of the AVID coordinators indicated that the AVID elective classroom at their school provided help for AVID students by helping them prepare for the SAT/ACT tests, college essays, and assistance with the college application process. From the site team observations in the AVID elective class, study skills were explained and practiced many times in order for students to use them in other academic classes.

Within the AVID curriculum, the recommendation is that tutors be used as one of the strategies, which is very challenging; tutors are very difficult to find and train, not to mention finding the money to pay these tutors services. The seventh through the eleventh program essentials are also instructionally based essentials. Tutors should be students from colleges and universities, and they must be trained to implement the methodologies used in AVID (AVID: Decades of College Dreams, 2007). Tutors are not easy to find, hire, and train, but when available, AVID materials claim tutors have a profound impact on AVID students:

The training of tutors is an important piece to effective tutorials…. As a part of the certification process, AVID tutors are required to have at least 16 hours of tutor training in AVID methodologies and they must demonstrate the AVID methodologies in their work with students...The absorption of methodologies by tutors allows AVID to expand its reach beyond the students in the AVID classroom. (Nelson, 2009, p. 3)
Tutors are paid or volunteer depending on the school district and the funding availability. In Lafayette County money for tutors was provided but the individual schools were responsible for finding their own tutors and training them.

The ninth through the eleventh AVID program essentials deal with the student performance data and are also considered leadership based essentials. The AVID Data System affords a conduit for sites to monitor their own progress, while also providing data collection in an organized manner and serving as the foundation for on-going evaluation and planning to ensure the success of the AVID program. The AVID system facilitates the process that helps determine the level of certification for each participating school. The schools involved in this study could possibly possess one of the following certification labels at any particular time:

- Certified – all eleven essentials are rated “Meets Certification Standards” (level 1 or higher).
- Highly Certified – consistently meets certification standards and has at least six essentials rated at “Routine Use” (level 2).
- Certified and eligible to apply to become an AVID Demonstration School – All eleven essentials are implemented effectively for at least 3 consecutive years with at least one graduating class of at least twenty seniors and are rated “Routine use” (level 2 or higher). The school sends a team to attend the demonstration strand in the summer institute and completes the demonstration school application.

The two high schools involved in this study at this time are labeled as follows: Remington High School is “AVID Certified” and Arrow Smith High School is “AVID
Highly Certified” with the intention of becoming an AVID Demonstration School. After completing a self-study to rate your site on all eleven essentials, your AVID regional/district writes a recommendation for the appropriate school. These certifications are determined from year to year.

**Essential AVID Components**

The AVID program provides a number of specific strategies that are to be used within the classroom. As each high school prepares to implement their own AVID program, certain areas of the program are allowed to be modified but other areas are not. The research question focused on the differences in the implementation process between the two high schools. In order to answer the research question will focus specifically on the leadership based essentials specified by the AVID program and the implementation process. The AVID curriculum provides specific recommendations for classroom activities, such as Cornell Notes and WICOR, which directly impact what happens in the classroom; others are more leadership based. There are some aspects that are less obvious, but still have a big influence on AVID, such as the understanding and supervision of the program within the building. This study focused on the leadership essential components and other essential components that are less tangible. It is important to know what elements in a school make AVID a successful program. The essentials have been split up by leadership, instructional, and other implementation essentials in Table 5 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Leadership Based Essentials</strong></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Selection</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Table 5 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voluntary participation and Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVID trained tutors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Site Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Elective Class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructional Based Essentials**

| Academic rigor |

**Other Implementation Essentials**

| Communication of AVID’s Mission to staff and students |

Tables 6 and 7 are brief comparisons of the schools based on responses given by the building principal, the AVID Administrator, and the AVID coordinator for both high schools. Responses are listed under the specific type of essential where it belongs.

*Interview and Observation Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6 - Interview Response/Site Team Observation Comparisons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leadership Based Essentials</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Selection</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 6 continued

| **Voluntary Participation and Responsibilities** | Assistant Principal went in to speak with the principal and walked out as the AVID Coordinator. (King interview) Teachers are asked to teach the AVID curriculum (King interview). Email was sent to the staff requesting teacher volunteers from each department to be part of the AVID Site Team. (AVID Site Team Observation) AVID admin/Coordinator oversees the program, meets with the principal and provides support as to teachers’ needs. He is also part of the teacher evaluation process so performance is looked at closely. (King interview) | AVID Coordinator came into position suddenly but was glad to fill the position. (Cunningham interview) AVID teachers volunteer to join the team. Personal invitation is given to teachers by team members (Cunningham interview) AVID Coordinator manages the program, meets with the principal and offers help to the teachers’. (Cunningham interview) |
| **AVID Trained Tutors** | No. Looking into it. (King interview) | Yes. Provided by Federal Work Study and they come from (College nearby) (Cunningham interview). |
| **AVID Site Team** | Site Team meets once a month after school. Sub committees, people from the site team, meet after school. (King interview) | Site Team meets once a month after school and teachers collaborate amongst themselves for help with the AVID curriculum when needed. (Cunningham interview). AVID team divides AVID duties. (AVID Site Team Observation) |
| **AVID Data** | No. Data is not shared but strategies are shared weekly. (King interview) | Yes. It is often shared when an AVID strategy training occurs. (Stevenson interview) |
### Table 6 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVID Professional &amp; Staff Development</th>
<th>Site Team attends school district trainings. Some Site Team members have attended at least one AVID Summer Institute. Sometimes AVID information is offered in a faculty meeting. We put AVID information in teacher’s boxes throughout the year. (King interview)</th>
<th>Site Team attends school district trainings. Some Site Team members have attended at least one AVID Summer Institute. Information is given to staff at faculty meetings. (Cunningham interview)</th>
<th>The county offered some AVID workshops at one of the middle schools during the year last year for anyone who wanted to attend. (Harrington interview)</th>
<th>There are in-house trainings periodically. (Stevenson interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVID Elective Class</td>
<td>There are two AVID Elective teachers. One of them is a science teacher. This teacher teaches AVID one, two, and three. The other AVID Elective teacher teaches English and is the AVID four teacher. (King interview)</td>
<td>Some of the AVID elective classes are on the A Day/B Day schedule (teachers do not like it) and the skinneys (teachers like it). (Stevenson interview)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7 - Continuation of the Interview Response/Site Team Observation Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Implementation Essentials</th>
<th>Remington</th>
<th>Arrow Smith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication of AVID Mission to staff and students</td>
<td>AVID students are asked to help out when they can. (Phillips interview)</td>
<td>AVID students serve as ambassadors throughout the year. (Harington interview)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student recommendations accepted from staff. (Site Team Observation)</td>
<td>If teachers know of a student who would benefit from AVID they give the name to Mrs. Cunningham. (Cunningham interview)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When examining the two tables, some differences and similarities in implementation become apparent. When looking at “Leadership Based Essentials” differences were found in most areas. When discussing student selection and voluntary participation and responsibilities, Remington High School required that students to go through the teacher recommendation and the student interview process, but it was only offered to AVID to students who were already in the AVID program at the middle school and to those who qualified for AVID. Arrow Smith followed the guidelines set forth by the AVID program. The participation aspect varied in both schools. The AVID coordinators positions were carefully selected, but the position came to them rather abruptly, but all other participants volunteered. As for the trained tutors and the AVID data, Remington High School did not have either component, and Arrow Smith High School had both components. The AVID site team in both schools met once a month, but the AVID professional development piece was offered in-house at Arrow Smith throughout the year, but Remington did not offer in-house professional development throughout the year. The AVID elective class was offered during the day through the skinnies schedule and the A Day and B Day schedule at both Remington and Arrow Smith High Schools.

Student Selection Process

The AVID program outlines the exact method for student selection. This procedure involves teacher recommendations, teacher interviews, and a consent formed signed by the parent and the student.

Mr. King described the Remington’s process of selecting students for the AVID program as one where teachers recommend students who then go through an interview process to ensure they fit the criteria. He stated that a majority of the AVID middle school
students stayed in the AVID program even if they did not perform well in the interview process. He also added that sometimes they didn’t remain in AVID for the whole year. He also mentioned that the selected students are closely observed throughout the school year and the student’s counselor kept a check on the student’s progress. The site team did not want to take a student out of the AVID program if they had already been part of it in the middle school and wanted to stay in the program (K.C. King Interview, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016). Mr. King added that the course selection decisions were made by the student’s counselor, student, and the AVID teacher.

Mrs. Harington described their AVID program as being laid out in a similar manner. She referenced the selection of AVID students at her school as somewhat similar but with a few minor differences. She stated that all AVID students from the middle school do not get into the AVID program, and many that were not in the AVID program become part of the AVID program because, “We recruit, but we don’t just recruit AVID kids, we recruit all the kids” (E.D. Harington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016). She further added that the recruitment process began with the AVID representatives and counselors going to the middle school to speak to the students about the AVID program. When the students arrive at Arrow Smith as 9th graders, they all go through the student selection process from the beginning (E.D. Harington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

Voluntary Participation and Responsibilities

AVID materials emphasize that all AVID participants must volunteer to be part of the program. It is vital that the administrators understand the underlying principle of this program essential in order for the program to be a success. Successful implementation of the
AVID program relies on the commitment of the administration to ensure that the eleven essentials are implemented with fidelity.

When asked about the voluntary process leading to the AVID administrator’s position, both administrators seem to have gained the position “somewhat unexpectedly”. Mr. King was asked to be part of a meeting with the principal. During the meeting, the need for an AVID Administrator/Coordinator came up and when he walked out, Mr. King said, “I walked out with a new title” (E.D. Harington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

I discovered that Arrow-Smith High School had an AVID Administrator when I sat in on the AVID Site Team Meeting, was introduced to everyone, and the assistant principal was introduced as the AVID Administrator; in an earlier interview with the principal she said that she was the AVID Administrator. When questioning Mr. Cunningham about his becoming the AVID coordinator, he stated that:

The previous coordinator had been the coordinator for twelve years and had done a great job… The title change happened rather abruptly; when Mrs. Harington became our new principal and I was asked to be the AVID coordinator. After some days of thinking about it, I accepted the role. As the AVID Coordinator and the English teacher, I try to provide as much support and help as I can. (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016)

The AVID Coordinator at Remington High mentioned that it was not that difficult to keep a close check on the AVID teacher’s implementation of the AVID curriculum because she is one of the administrators at the school who evaluates the AVID teachers. “I have a habit of looking for AVID strategies in all classes; no one is penalized for not using them
unless I am observing an AVID Elective Class; I expect to see AVID strategies used in those classes” (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

**AVID Trained Tutors**

The AVID elective class is composed of students who are capable of completing rigorous coursework, but for whatever reason they are not reaching their potential. The AVID elective teacher is someone who creates an atmosphere of in-depth learning and provides resources to help this happen. When discussing trained tutors, Remington High School did not have tutors available to help the AVID students, while Arrow-Smith High School discovered a means of acquiring tutors for their AVID students. Their tutors came from a college nearby and were paid via a federal work study program. They were also able to get graduates from their high school to come back and volunteer hours in the AVID Elective classroom.

Mrs. Phillips expressed that, “Our school is too far out and college kids are not interested in coming out this far for volunteer hours…but that does not stop us from continuing to look.” When asked about their graduate students helping out, she did not know of anyone that had returned to help with the AVID program (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

**AVID Site Team**

Both schools offer opportunities for collaboration, but those opportunities are quite different at each school. Remington’s site team meets regularly once a month but also has four sub-committees. One committee gathers information concerning possible donations; another one involves community members at the school level; another committee group collects ideas for fundraisers; still another committee plans for an AVID parent night. If any
of these committees have questions or concerns about a decision being made, they report to the AVID site team and that is where the final decision is made. The sub groups are required to keep the AVID site team informed of their decisions before putting anything out to the public.

As for the function of the AVID site team, Mrs. Phillips stated that any AVID site team is the backbone for the success of the AVID program. “That is where important decisions for the students are made” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016). She further added that the AVID site team should always be vigilant in ways of making the AVID program stronger. In Mrs. Phillips’ opinion, the site team should be a group of willing and capable teachers who respond to various concerns dealing with the AVID program. She also expects her AVID administrator/coordinator to keep her informed of any issues that arise and then they both will meet with the site team and as part of the team the two of them as well as the team members will look for solutions together.

At Arrow-Smith High School, the site team meets once a month and that is where the discussions concerning donations, ideas for fundraisers, community involvement, and a parent night occur. When I observed the Arrow Smith site team, everyone introduced themselves and Mr. Stevenson introduced himself as the AVID principal. When Mr. Stevenson was questioned about his new role, he was not sure why he acquired the new role but assured me that he had a lot of knowledge and experience with the AVID program and was happy to help fill the role as the AVID principal.

Mrs. Harington stated that Mr. Cunningham, the AVID coordinator, helped identify students who met the AVID standards, and he helped make sure that the AVID program was a recognized program within the community. He also ensured that the AVID program
maintained the structural framework created by the AVID foundation. At both high schools, the AVID coordinator is empowered with many leadership roles and responsibilities for the AVID program (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

**AVID Data**

As a requirement, throughout the school year each school collects data in a variety of ways. The school district collects data from all schools at the end of the school year and sends it into the AVID Center. As a result, the AVID Center analyzes the data and then shares it with each school on multiple levels: overall level, state level, county level, district level, and school level in order for them to examine how the AVID program in their school is progressing (AVID Center, 2013). This equips the schools with information that will help them know what areas need addressed for further growth. Various data on all AVID students is collected at Arrow-Smith and shared periodically when AVID training occurs throughout the school year. The AVID students ACT scores are compared to the rest of the eleventh grade non-AVID students and shared with the faculty. Other AVID data is discussed in PLC’s toward the end of the semester when EOC’s and NC Finals are coming up. Mrs. Harrington stated that because the AVID coordinator gathered the data for the school district, he was the one who presented it to the staff. She also stated that it is probably not shared as often as it should be, because of time constraints. She mentioned that the data he shares lets the teachers see where they are and then she follows up with ideas on what can be done from that point. Mrs. Harrington said that the purpose of him sharing data was not to point anyone out but an attempt to guide the instructional piece (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).
When Mr. King was questioned about the data output for Remington High School he said, “Unfortunately, no data is shared here, but AVID strategies are shared weekly…We are looking into it; we are just not quite there” (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016). Mrs. Phillips did not bring up the sharing of the AVID data component, but she did mention that “…other than the student’s progress report being shared with the AVID coordinator, which allowed for conversation between the student and the AVID Elective teacher if needed”. She also mentioned that if anyone was to ask about the AVID data she would be more than willing to share. “It is not a secret; I just don’t think we are at the point of sharing the data in a meeting with the staff” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

AVID Professional Development

As for the professional development component, the AVID program strongly encourages that the site team or most members of the site team attend the summer institute, but it does not require that each school have staff development or that all AVID teachers attend workshops periodically. The local staff development is left to the school or district to decide if it is necessary.

When Mrs. Phillips was questioned about staff development she stated that with the exception of the site team going to the summer conference and not all of them have gone, there had not been any extensive staff development offered to teachers in the building. There is, however, information given to the staff on paper about what is going on in the AVID program throughout the year. There are not any formal presentations offered to the entire staff, but informal AVID workshops are offered to the AVID staff throughout the school year (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).
Mrs. Harington at Arrow Smith High School indicated that workshops were conducted throughout the year for the entire staff. It is a mandatory attendance. “If a teacher does not attend, I want to know why. The workshops are not once a week, so I don’t feel like that is a lot to ask of them and it is during their planning period.” (E.D. Harington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016). She stated that as far as she knew it was the AVID coordinator who taught the workshops, but she felt rather confident in saying that if any of the AVID site team members wanted to teach a workshop, Mr. Cunningham would not have a problem with it. She also mentioned that she did not know for sure if all the site team members had attended the summer institute but she knew that several of them had attended the summer institute (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016). During the interview with Mr. Stevenson, the AVID administrator at Arrow Smith, he commented that he had never attended a summer institute but planned to attend one next summer if the opportunity was provided. Both principals mentioned that either last year or the year before the county provided some AVID workshops and several of the AVID teachers attended J.H. Stevenson, January 4, 2017).

AVID Elective Class

The AVID program requires that all AVID students take a minimum of one honors class each semester and it must be a core class. Students are allowed to take more if they want, but Mrs. Phillips said that is not the norm for Remington High School. She also mentioned that there was not a specific strategy to get this done, but all counselors know that AVID students are to be placed in at least one honors class each semester. When questioned about the AVID schedule, she said that the AVID 1, 2, 3 ran on the “skinny” schedule where the AVID 4 ran on the A Day/B Day schedule. No more details were given concerning the
AVID schedule. Mrs. Phillips mentioned that there was not a counselor solely devoted to the AVID program; all counselors looked at all schedules and took care of any schedule change that was needed (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

Arrow-Smith High School also requires that all AVID students take at least one honors class and that it must be a core class. Mrs. Harington said that all schedule changes are done through the AVID counselor. At Arrow Smith, according to Mr. Stevenson, all AVID classes are all year long classes. Some of the AVID classes are on the “skinny” schedule while others are on the A Day/B Day schedule. Mr. Stevenson said that the teachers preferred the “skinny” schedule because on the A Day/B Day, “It is too much of a gap…and you lose some of the momentum in the lessons being taught” (J.H. Stevenson, Personal Communication, January 4, 2017). Mr. Cunningham said that if a 9th grade student has issues with his/her schedule they come to him and they talk about it and then an email is sent to the counselor to see if the change can be made (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).

There were a few differences and similarities between the two high schools in this arena. Each school has its own method of scheduling students. They both utilize the skinny schedule and the A Day/ B Day but the scheduling is completely different. Mr. Cunningham, the AVID teacher/coordinator, is quite involved with the freshmen because, according to Mr. Cunningham, “they are the ones that need the most guidance” (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016). At Remington High School, Mr. King leaves the checking on student schedules for the guidance counselors and teachers (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

*Communicating AVID’s Mission to Staff and Students*
When examining Table 7, a discrepancy is noticed. The one discrepancy is when promoting the AVID program. At the beginning of the year, both schools attempt to promote the AVID program to the students at the first parent meeting of the school year and at grade level meetings during the first week of school.

For the first parent meeting at Arrow Smith, AVID students were asked to wear their T-shirts and they had a table that provided information for parents and other students. Information was given to all students. Arrow Smith High School advertised the AVID program on their web site. Arrow-Smith High encouraged the AVID students to serve as ambassadors throughout the year at different events. The students have AVID T-shirts and are asked to wear them on certain occasions, at which time the students are expected to participate in the program in some manner (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

Remington High School took a simpler approach. Remington High did not advertise the AVID program on their website. For Remington’s first meeting of the school year, adults did the presentation and students would help by passing out the brochures or answering questions. Also, promoting the AVID program was something that was more subtle throughout the school year. Information about AVID did not seem to be readily available for all students. The AVID site team did attempt to get the students T-shirts but those T-shirts were worn on field trips; there was no mention of the students wearing them for other occasions to help promote the AVID program (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).
Administrations’ Understanding of the AVID Program

Sub question one investigated the administration’s understanding of the AVID program, the commitment to the AVID program, and the involvement in the implementation of the AVID program. For this research, the AVID administration is comprised of the building principal and the AVID administrator for the school. Sub question two asked the same questions to the AVID coordinator. The one question was asked of each administrator and coordinator in each school building. This section also discusses the data related to these issues.

The administrator’s understanding of the AVID program, as well as that of the coordinator supervising the program implementation, was a question that guided this study. Administrators and the AVID coordinators acknowledged their understanding through their responses to questions that asked them to explain the AVID program in their individual buildings, the selection of an AVID teacher, and the process used to communicate their vision of the AVID program to the faculty. The interview data indicated that leadership had some understanding of the program, but that the process used to implement the program was different at each school.

AVID Program

The principals of both schools described AVID in their building as an important part of the instructional day. Mrs. Phillips, the principal of Remington High, stated that the AVID program in her school focuses on preparing minorities and economically disadvantaged students with the goal of getting them to attend either a two year or four-year college. She stated that enrolling AVID students in higher level coursework is important to get them into college “or other types of higher learning because all students will not attend college but they
will have the knowledge and resources to access a higher education if they want to” (T. R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

Mrs. Phillips hopes that students enrolled in AVID will benefit from the help, structure, and encouragement provided by the AVID site team. She also stated that AVID provided for the students skills of their own that will help them explore and resolve dilemmas in the future. Mrs. Phillips indicated that AVID is one of the classes that students take during the regular school day and that the students must have teacher references and go through an interview procedure before becoming part of the AVID program. She also stated that there had been some changes in the AVID staff, and these changes had caused some setbacks in the program, such as when the AVID coordinator decided that she no longer would be able to be the AVID coordinator for personal reasons, AVID teachers leaving, creating another available AVID teaching position. “All teachers are not interested in being invested in the AVID program and I understand that… We want the right people in the right positions” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

Mrs. Harington, the principal at Arrow-Smith High, described the program as one with a dynamic site team. AVID students work as school ambassadors in an attempt to interest other students within the school building. The principal also stated that they are working on becoming a demonstration school (exemplary model) sometime in the near future. She said that putting the AVID the students’ front and center as often as possible is something they are constantly striving to do; this would help them achieve their Demonstration status (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016). Mr. Cunningham, the teacher/coordinator, is the person charged with making sure that at Arrow-
Smith the AVID implementation is faithful to the fundamentals and purpose of the program (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).

AVID Staff Recruitment

When replying to questions referring to the principal’s understanding of the different roles held by individuals involved in AVID, Mrs. Phillips’ commented that she believed that the AVID coordinator should work closely with the principal, the site team, and the staff in order to strengthen the AVID program. She stated that she felt that her AVID administrator/coordinator believed in the program and was an advocate for their program. She also emphasized that the AVID administrator/coordinator at Remington High was seen as a liaison between her and the site team. She mentioned that she was aware that the task at hand for the administrator/coordinator was huge but she was there to help in any way (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

When describing the AVID program at Remington, Mr. King, AVID coordinator, stated that the AVID program at Remington had gone through a big change this year with the sudden change of the AVID coordinator. For personal reasons the English teacher that had been the AVID coordinator for about three years could no longer continue in that position; he still taught English at the school but could no longer serve in the capacity as the AVID coordinator (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

At Remington, Mrs. Phillips stated that the AVID teacher/coordinator checked the AVID students’ schedule to make sure they were enrolled in an honors class and made sure it was an honors class that was a fit for the student. She was not sure when that happened, but mentioned that it was most likely during the first week or two of school when the schedule

Mr. Cunningham, AVID coordinator at Arrow-Smith, indicated that their program was growing and expanding. He stated that they are currently searching for more teachers to join the site team. He further stated that, “We have several teachers that incorporate the AVID strategies within their classrooms...we are trying to get them to join our team, so they can help us keep the AVID program strong. It is a very positive program in our building and we want to keep it that way” (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).

A question asked of Mrs. Harington was why she did not appoint an assistant principal to be the AVID administrator and her response was that the school wants to be a Demonstration School and in order to do that the principal had to play a primary role concerning the AVID decisions, so she decided to appoint herself as the AVID administrator so it would push her into being more involved in the program. She mentioned that the administrative team meets to decide who will oversee certain programs at the beginning of the year but that sometimes she is the one that has to play a major role in some areas, and it is not necessarily by her choice, “it is the nature of the beast” (E.D. Harington Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

Mrs. Harington stated that the AVID coordinator should be someone who communicates the needs of the group and advocates for the program at all times. She also stressed that because the AVID coordinator is so important to the AVID program, that person must want to be in that position. She stated that
… if there was a position within a program that she felt was really needed it would be the AVID coordinator. Without someone incredibly organized and knowledgeable about the program itself, the implementation of the program at any school would be in jeopardy. Our AVID coordinator is exceptional. (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016)

*AVID’s Mission*

At Remington, the AVID mission is communicated in small doses to the staff and community. The principal, Mrs. Phillips, and the AVID coordinator, Mr. King, work closely together making sure that the AVID program continues to flourish as the year progresses. Mrs. Phillips shares her vision with the site team by letting them know that she is proud of what they have accomplished as a team and what she would like to see happen in the future (Remington Site Team Observation, November 2, 2016). With the staff, she keeps them informed at meetings as well as with emails as to what is going on with the AVID program (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

Mr. King felt rather sure that because of the site team’s enthusiasm and dedication for the AVID program, students would receive that extra personal touch from one or more AVID teachers. As for the faculty, the basic understanding of the AVID program was shared from time to time in staff meetings and sometimes brought up in PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

When questioned about the students’ role within the AVID program, Mrs. Phillips responded, “I want these students to come in willing to accept help that we can offer for their future and as they mature and progress through the program I want them to take an active role in their education” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016). Mrs.
Phillips mentioned that the organizational component of the AVID program that provides the students will be a skill that will benefit them wherever they go and in whatever they do. They do not require, but are strongly encouraged, to participate in clubs when possible because this becomes another avenue for them to grow as they become adults.

The AVID students at Remington High are seen as miniature adults. The students should have a relationship with the AVID teachers that allow them to ask for help when it is needed. Mrs. Phillips sees the students’ role as one where they gain organizational skills for life. “The AVID program is intended for students to be successful in higher level courses, and go to college… while also teaching them ways to find answers to problems they are unable to solve themselves” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016). Mr. King readily agreed with the idea that students must be held accountable for their own future. He said that:

Remington High students are being afforded a unique opportunity that will help them become responsible citizens. We try to make sure that the correct AVID students are placed in the AVID program, so that it can continue to be a successful program. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves that the AVID program is not a remedial program and as with all programs, not all students are suited for it. (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016)

Mrs. Harington’s response to communicating AVID’s mission was that in order for any program to be successful, the mission for that program needs to be shared with those who are involved with it and with those who are impacted by the program. The AVID students at Arrow Smith on parent night give a brief synopsis of the AVID program to the parents. Several AVID students also go with the counselors to the middle school and help
with the recruitment process by sharing something personal and positive about the AVID program. She then stated, “...Another personal and positive touch, I think that would come from the teachers. I would hope that they constantly tell the students why it is important for them to do their best.” Mrs. Harrington stated that the AVID administrator oversees the site team and then he relays information to her. As for publicizing the AVID program to the community, Arrow Smith High School had a website with an AVID link that provided all the information for someone wanting to sign up for the AVID program or to merely obtain information about the program (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016).

At Arrow-Smith High School the AVID students are told that the AVID program is a program that although more is expected of them, they were selected and the final results are well worth the effort. Mrs. Harrington stated that, “Every student in AVID at her school knows that the AVID opportunity is not for everybody. It is a process that will hopefully provide all AVID students with determination to get the job done.” At this school, all AVID students are expected to be part of a club or extracurricular group. It is not optional. Mr. Cunningham stated:

I am in charge of making sure that everyone on the site team is aware of the nuts and bolts of the AVID program. I relay any important information to the principal. I also am in constant communication with all AVID teachers and the AVID counselor as to how students are doing. I get the interview process details together so the team and myself well can carry out the interviews. (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016)
Both AVID coordinators answered questions about whether or not they thought their principal was committed to keeping the AVID program with or without funding. Mr. King and Mr. Cunningham said that their staff firmly believes that their principal is committed to keeping the program. When asked about what would happen if the program did dissolve, Mrs. Phillips said that, “She did not see that happening anytime soon. After all, why would we get rid of a program that is working for the students?” (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016). Mrs. Harington, the principal at Arrow Smith, pointed out:

Well, I don’t see why WICOR, Cornell Notes, and all the other AVID strategies that we have learned how to use would just quit being used because we cannot carry the “name” of the program. These strategies that we use under the AVID name are just good, sound teaching strategies that we should use whether we have the AVID program or not. (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, November 8, 2016)

I don’t think either principal plans on eliminating the AVID program whether they have funding for it or not because there is a true belief that the strategies the teachers use will benefit their students for the future no matter what title the program carries.

**Administration’s Commitment to the AVID program**

The principals’ commitment to the AVID program was another component of this study. The principals revealed their commitment to the AVID program through their responses concerning the staff development opportunities, AVID personnel selection, and support for the students.

Remington High School has two AVID teachers. One of the AVID teachers teaches AVID one, two, and three. The other teacher teaches AVID four. Both AVID teachers have
at least 5 years or more of experience in the educational field. There is not an “AVID
counselor”. All counselors at Remington know how the AVID program works and are
expected to work within the parameters of the AVID program. Mrs. Phillips stated that there
had not been any extensive staff development offered to teachers within the building. Some
of the AVID strategies have been shown to the faculty during staff meetings. Because it is a
small school there is not an AVID teacher for every core subject. Mrs. Phillips said:

We are a small school and many times one person has to do the job of two or three. I
hate that we lost our AVID coordinator but things happen that we have no control
over and we have to do the best we can with those circumstances. I am certain that
Mr. King will do an excellent job. He was previously at a middle school and had
some dealings with the AVID program there, so because he was familiar with AVID
program the learning curve should not so big and I am always here if he has any

At Arrow-Smith, there are several teachers who teach the AVID elective. All the
teachers that are involved in AVID have 5 years of more in the educational field. An AVID
teacher’s schedule varies from subject to subject. Mr. Cunningham said, “The courses run
year long.” Some are referred to as “skinnies” and other AVID courses are on the A Day/B
Day schedule, which they are looking to get away from because teachers say that some of the
momentum in the lessons being taught is lost; there was just too big of a gap within lessons.
Mr. Cunningham pointed out that once a student becomes an AVID student at Arrow Smith
there are certain things they are expected to do each year and that is reviewed with each
student each year and carefully monitored:
a. Ninth grade AVID students are expected to attend field trips and help with guest
speakers and presentations.

b. Tenth grade AVID students are expected to start looking over colleges of their
choice.

c. Eleventh grade AVID students are expected to apply to colleges.

d. Twelfth grade AVID students are required to develop and present a portfolio that
represents their years in the AVID program (A.N. Cunningham, Personal
Communication, September 27, 2016).

Mrs. Harington said that the AVID coordinator helps the teachers help the students
with these responsibilities. She felt like that position was vital for the students’ success. “The
person in this position must be positive, uplifting; someone that knows the AVID program
and knows how to help the students and the staff when the need arises. The person in this
position needs to know their stuff” (E.D. Harington, personal communication, November 8,
2016).

**Administration’s Involvement in the AVID Program**

Principals become involved with their programs at different stages of the program, in
different ways, and demonstrate their leadership to different levels. Some are involved in a
direct way and others choose to become indirectly involved.

When Mrs. Harington was questioned about what she would do if she found out that
the program was not being implemented correctly, she stated that she would first want to
have a discussion as to why the person was not doing what he/she was supposed to be doing,
especially if this dealt with one of the AVID elective teachers. She then proceeded to state
that:
There are many resources available here at the school level and probably even at the district level that I would be really be surprised at such a thing occurring. The AVID elective teachers are not novice teachers; they have been teaching at least three years or better and they chose to teach the AVID elective, so I am fairly confident that if these teachers needed help, they would seek it (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).

Neither Mrs. Phillips nor Mrs. Harington shared any concerns about the implementation of the AVID program or staff performance. Mrs. Phillips said that she periodically checked students’ grades which would be among the first indicators that something is not right. When doing her walk-through observations, she made sure to include the AVID elective classes in order to ensure that the AVID strategies are being delivered appropriately. Mrs. Phillips said that:

Currently, everything is going well. I have good teachers in place and am confident that they are teaching as needed. At this point in time I have no reason to believe that any of my AVID elective teachers are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, so I am not going to go down that road until I think it is necessary (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, October 13, 2016).

Communication is important to the implementation of any program. If it does not occur then things will not take place the way they are meant to take place. The communication piece for the implementation process was looked at by asking both AVID administrators about the communication between them and the principal and observing a site team meeting.
When asked about the communication between the AVID administrator and the principal, Mr. King stated that he and the principal meet as needed. He mentioned:

Since I am the AVID coordinator and an assistant principal, I feel like we are on top of things. If there is something to discuss, I don’t hesitate to discuss it with her. When we meet, we do talk about teachers and students and that includes the people involved in the AVID program. Sometimes it is not what the teachers and the students are doing or not doing but what can we do or not do to help our students and teachers (K.C. King. Personal Communication, November 2. 2016).

Mr. Stevenson said:

Once a month, we discuss our site team goals and we meet more often for other items. We talk about how our observations are going. Some of our meetings usually deal with the day to day things that we need to do and any particular student or teacher that is struggling and that could be a teacher within the AVID program. I feel comfortable going to Mrs. Harrington to talk about anything that might be going on within the AVID group or for that matter anything else that is going on in the building (J.H. Stevenson, Personal Communication, November 4, 2017).

The AVID site team meeting is one of the perfect places for communication to occur among teachers, counselors, principals, and others who are a part of the team. When observing the site teams at Remington and Arrow-Smith, conversations were uplifting and ideas were supported from the principal and from the AVID coordinator. Participants in both site team meetings exchanged ideas and suggestions for getting others to join the team.

At Remington High School, the majority of the conversations at the site team meeting dealt with how to raise money. They were still struggling with what to do and who to ask for
money so the kids could benefit from future field trips and t-shirts, if possible. They wanted the students to pay for as little as possible. The process to share AVID information with the staff was going to be putting AVID strategies on colored paper and placing it in teachers’ boxes. They mentioned a couple of teachers that might want to join the AVID team (Remington Site Team Observation, November 2, 2016). At Arrow-Smith High School’s site team meeting, they also spoke about how to raise money, but they already had fundraisers in mind and from the discussion that proceeded, avenues for the money did not seem to be that hard to come by. This group seemed to already have a pot of money that they could access if needed. Increasing the enrollment within their AVID team was another item on the agenda (Arrow Smith Site Team Observation, October 5, 2016). When observing both site teams the need for community involvement became apparent but was not exactly pursued.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented responses to the research questions that will help determine the level of understanding, involvement, and commitment of the AVID administration and the AVID teacher/coordinator in relation to the implementation of the program. Also included were the participants’ perceptions and my interpretations of them along with summaries of the three interviews, data from the AVID Center and the two site team observations. With the use of this data from each school, I obtained a basic knowledge of the level of understanding, commitment, and involvement from the participants.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, INTERPRETATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter includes a summary of the information gathered in Chapter IV. It examines two high schools within the same county. There are three high schools within Lafayette County but only two were chosen because the researcher worked at the third one, creating a conflict of interest. The study’s findings are discussed within the context of extant research. Implications for further research and for practice are offered. Also included in this chapter are conclusions gained based on the study’s findings.

The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in implementation of the AVID program in two high schools within the same district. Specific attention was directed to the role of the school administrators and the AVID coordinators’ implementation of the program. This study also addresses the differences found within the two high schools concerning the school-wide implementation of the program. This study utilized a comparative case study method in order to examine the differences between smallest school within the county and the largest school in the county. The administrators and the AVID coordinators’ understanding of the program, commitment to the program, and their level of involvement in the implementation of the AVID program within each school will also be addressed.

Research Question

When looking at the implementation of the program in the two high schools, aspects of the implementation process were examined with the aid of one research question assisted by two sub questions.
1. What are the differences in the implementation of the AVID program in the two chosen high schools with regard to:
   
   a. AVID administration’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement.
   
   b. AVID teacher/coordinator’s level of commitment, understanding, and involvement.

**Study’s Findings**

*AVID Program Implementation Essentials*

This section explores the AVID administrators’ and AVID coordinators’ dedication concerning the methods of implementation of the AVID program’s essentials between the two high schools. This section will also spotlight significant details connected to the implementation similarities and differences of the program found in each high school within the eleven essentials.

The first AVID essential deals with the student selection. This criterion is clearly stated in all of AVID program materials. AVID students are those who are underachieving but have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard but are deficient in the encouragement and support from home.

Arrow Smith High School adhered to the AVID student selection procedures. For the ninth graders in both schools, teachers provided student recommendations, applicants were interviewed, and contracts were signed (E.D. Harrington, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016). At Remington High School, the AVID student selection was followed for new incoming students, but the middle school students who were already in the program were required to go through the process but were sometimes allowed to continue in the program, even if they may have scored weak in specific areas of the selection process (K.C.
At both schools all students, whether they were AVID students in the middle school or not, had to go through the AVID student selection process and both high schools selected enough for one ninth grade class, but fidelity to the implementation process was not shown at Remington High School.

The second AVID essential mentions that participants, both students and staff, should be voluntary participants in the AVID program. The AVID materials indicate that the AVID coordinator should be fully dedicated to AVID.

The AVID coordinator at Remington was not new to the AVID program and was quite aware that as an assistant principal, attempting to obtain his doctorate degree and being the AVID coordinator was going to be somewhat stressful. He went to the AVID summer institute with hopes of getting some assistance with the coordinating aspect but there were not any workshops for that area of the program. Because his previous training was designed for the teaching aspect and not the coordinating part of the program, he became familiar with the coordinating piece by reading the AVID materials, asking a lot of questions to other coordinators, and getting help from his principal (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

The teacher/coordinator at Arrow Smith also was not a novice to the AVID program. He willingly accepted the position when it was offered. Mr. Cunningham was excited and willing to start on the coordinating journey. He said that it came at the right time for him. Since obtaining the AVID coordinator’s position at Arrow Smith, he tries to go every year to the summer institute AVID offers for the exchange of ideas and to keep his network of colleagues within the AVID community up to date (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).
AVID Awareness materials (2013) state that because of the time and commitment required to make the AVID program a success, the AVID student, AVID coordinator, and the AVID teachers should choose to be part of the AVID program. Also emphasized within the AVID program is that in order for the students to become independent learners, they must make the initial choice to be part of the AVID program (p. 30). In both schools, there was a meeting at the beginning of the school year to inform parents and students of the AVID program.

As for the third AVID essential, the school must be committed to the full implementation of the AVID program. The AVID Elective must be viewed by all as an essential part of the AVID students’ academic success. The AVID Elective must be offered during the regular academic school day. It is important that students and staff recognize that in order for AVID’s skills and curriculum to be effective to its greatest potential students must be exposed to all components (AVID: In Pursuit of a Success: Dream Big, 2013).

At both high schools, all teachers and students were part of the AVID program by choice. At Arrow-Smith High School the site team talked about which teachers on staff might want to be part of the AVID site team, and they wanted to add a personal touch to the invitation. The method the team decided upon was that one of the AVID members would approach the chosen teacher with the idea of joining the AVID site team (Arrow Smith Site Team Observation, October 5, 2016). At Remington High, an email was sent out to all teachers in the school asking for volunteers to be part of the AVID site team (Remington Site Team Observation, November 2, 2016). Whether or not anyone joined the AVID site team from either school was not revealed to the researcher.
The fourth AVID essential indicates that the AVID coordinator, teacher, and counselor must work together and guide the AVID students with their educational plan in order for them to meet their academic goal. AVID students must be enrolled in a course of study that enables them to meet the requirements for being accepted into a college. AVID’s *Participant Handbook* (2013) states that in addition to the tutorial support for the students’ subject area, the AVID class must provide:

- Direct instruction in, and practice with, study skills and strategies, including time management, assignment and grade recording, tutorials, and binder organization;
- College and career awareness, college entry skills, and test-taking strategies (e.g., PSAT/PLAN, Explore, SAT, ACT);
- Binder notes regularly evaluated by tutors/teachers (p. 31)

At both high schools, all AVID students are required to take a minimum of one upper level course each semester as expected from the AVID program. When asked about students taking more than one upper level course per semester, both AVID coordinators said they would not discourage a student from doing such if a student showed interest in such a thing, but they would not advise students to do that because one upper level course was usually enough. “The students that are in this program are not used to taking honors classes, so it would need to be a special circumstance in order for me to agree to that” (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016). The AVID curriculum specifies that the AVID class must meet on a regular basis and in both schools the AVID class was held every day.
The AVID elective teachers at both schools helped the AVID students sign up for the appropriate college entrance exams. Both coordinators mentioned that the testing information was given to students during their AVID elective class.

The fifth through the seventh essentials explain in great detail what the AVID program is and how a rigorous course of study is crucial to the success of the AVID student. AVID students are taught how to use strategies that help them be successful within the AVID classroom. These three essentials deal with the methodology that the AVID program stipulates must be taught within the AVID classroom. Because this study focused on the AVID administration’s implementation process, the AVID classroom was not observed.

While observing the AVID site team meeting at Arrow Smith High School, the group cheered when Mrs. Cunningham announced that the subscription for the “Weeks at a Glance” (WAG) materials had been ordered. These materials are purchased through the AVID program and offer plans that include the rigorous curriculum required for the ninth through twelfth grade AVID elective class. During the meeting, there was in-depth conversation about how to best utilize these materials (Arrow Site Team Observation, October 5, 2016). At Remington High School, there was not any mention of the “Weeks at a Glance” materials for the AVID elective class. Their discussion focused on the Cornell note taking strategy, the Socratic seminar, and the collaboration part of instruction, all of which are a requirement of the AVID elective class (Remington Site Team Observation, November 2, 2016). The “Weeks at a Glance” are expensive and that is probably why this group did not use them.

Within the eighth AVID essential the explanation of how vital the role of AVID tutorials and the AVID tutors played within the AVID elective class. Trained tutors are a must for the success of the AVID elective class. In order for AVID students to be successful
in college level classes, it is necessary that they get academic help from AVID tutors. Training materials for tutors are provided by the AVID program. One school provided tutors but the other high school did not. At Arrow Smith High School Mr. Cunningham said that their tutors were given modules to complete or read through, in order for them to become familiar with the AVID strategies that they will be teaching. Mr. Cunningham referenced the AVID tutors’ training as:

It’s kind of like on the job training. As for the 7:1 ratio that is required of the AVID program we are able to meet that ratio with our seniors helping as tutors. We would not be able to meet that ratio if we depended solely on the college students. Our seniors who are tutors are our upper level students from our school, and our college tutors are students from (a college from within the county). A lot of college students do not want to come out for an hour in the middle of the day to tutor high school students. The one student I had last year was one of our graduates from last year and she was excited about helping, but for the most part, it’s hard. (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communications, September 27, 2016).

At Remington High School the tutor component was not incorporated into their AVID program. Mr. King said that they did not have tutors because they were too far out and none of the college kids wanted to travel out that far. I ask about their graduates from last year helping out as tutors and Mr. King’s reply was that he was not aware of any of their last year’s graduates coming back to help. It is not known if Mr. King knew about getting help with the tutors from the county (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

The ninth essential dealt with the student progress that is monitored through the AVID data system and how it should be analyzed and shared at the local level. The AVID
data system is a tool that may be used for checking one’s own progress and/or to compare their progress with other AVID sites. Data collection and analysis is easily attainable and both schools use the AVID data but not in the same manner.

Remington High School mentioned that they shared strategies with the staff, but not data. Mr. King said he looked over it and if anyone wanted to examine the data, the administration would be glad to share it at any time; he just didn’t think that the staff was ready for that step. Mr. King stated that:

We try to put specific AVID strategies in teacher’s boxes and we are real excited when once in while we hear about someone using one or two of the AVID strategies in their classroom. We have a young staff; some of our teachers are new to AVID and we are still trying to get it off the ground (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016).

At Arrow Smith High School the AVID data is shared with the staff during faculty meetings with the site team, and sometimes in their PLC’s (Professional Learning Communities). Mr. Cunningham indicated that he shared all of the data with the administrators as soon as it was made available to him (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016). Because ignorance is not bliss and data can be interpreted in many ways it is important that it is shared and explained to those that it effects in order for improvements to begin. It would benefit both schools to share more AVID data from the AVID center, in other words data that informs the rest of the school who is involved in the AVID program, what kind of success is being seen with the AVID students. The kind of information that makes the AVID students feel that going the extra mile is worth it is the kind of AVID data that needs to be shared with students and faculty members. Arrow Smith
High School eagerly strives to help the AVID students’ successes be seen and heard, where Remington High School does not address data at all. This was another component of the AVID implementation that was not used and in some ways this essential could mean the success or the collapse of the AVID program, because adults and students, alike, need to know if what they are doing is working or not.

The tenth AVID essential made it clear that when a school system agrees to implement the AVID program and to participate in the AVID certification process, it was important that the costs, the tutors, the materials, and the staff development be carefully considered. The involvement of the AVID administrator at the AVID Summer Institute is crucial, since that person’s support for the AVID implementation is important. The Executive Director of Secondary Education in this school system supervises the AVID program in all middle schools and high schools. This person makes sure three to four people from each school can attend the AVID Institute. Periodically this individual visits each school’s AVID classes to make sure the AVID curriculum is being taught as needed, while also coming in to speak with the AVID coordinator to see how the program is progressing throughout the building.

The AVID coordinator and principal at Arrow Smith High have been to one AVID Summer Institute as an administrator (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016). He said that, “Because for the last few years the county has paid for some of us to go to the summer institute, most of the site team has been” (A.N. Cunningham, Personal Communications, September 27, 2016). The AVID site team offers training at several staff meetings throughout the school year. The AVID administrator at Arrow Smith has not been to any summer institutes but plans on going next summer, but all of the AVID administrators
and the AVID coordinator have been to local AVID training (T.R. Phillips, Personal Communication, September 27, 2016).

The AVID coordinator/AVID administrator at Remington High has been to a few of the AVID summer institutes and hopes to go again this summer. The principal has been to a few AVID summer institutes and plans to continue going in order to make sure they are implementing the program as needed. The AVID administrator/AVID coordinator and the building administrator at Remington have also been to local AVID training. The AVID training component seemed quite a bit uneven for both schools. Some of the AVID participants were trained and some were not; in my opinion that equates to a program that is not as successful as it could be.

The eleventh AVID essential gave details how a successful AVID site team is a group of educators from different subject areas that promote student learning, work together to achieve AVID’s mission, and makes sure that all of its students are achieving their educational goal. Arrow Smith High School and Remington High have AVID site teams comprised of an administrator, counselor, and several teachers from various content areas; not all content areas are represented but both site teams are working on getting all core areas represented on the site team. Both Mrs. Harington and Mrs. Phillips indicated that they would like to see their AVID program be able to reach more students. At both site team observations, AVID strategies were discussed and what steps were needed in order to help the AVID students reach their goals. The 2007 AVID Advancement Via Individual Determination: Administrator Guide revealed that a successful AVID site team is one that believes and encourages AVID’s mission while ensuring AVID students’ placement in rigorous classes.
When reviewing the AVID administrator’s responses in reference to what they thought was the site team’s purpose, it is similar to how the AVID materials describe the AVID site team. Mr. King mentioned that, “Remington’s site team is a group of educators that are role models for the students and support them in any way they can” (K.C. King, Personal Communication, November 2, 2016). Mr. Stevenson states that Arrow Smith’s site team is a dynamic group of teachers that want to help the AVID students to be successful in the college level but know that they have to be prepared at the high school level” (J.H. Stevenson, Personal Communication, January 4, 2017).

**Discussion of Study Findings**

As shown in chapter 2 in the literature review, there is a surplus of research available and articles written about the AVID program; nevertheless, there has been very little written about the implementation process of the AVID program in the high schools. I hope this research will add to the understanding of the AVID program and its ability to narrow the achievement gap that still exists between low income students and high income students. The implementation of AVID in both schools in one way or another consisted of the following six components that research deemed critical (Metz, Blaze, & Bowie, 2007)

1. Qualified personnel – By “qualified” the researcher is looking at attendance to the AVID Summer Institute. Arrow Smith’s building administrator was qualified but the AVID administrator was not. At Remington High School both administrators had attended the AVID Summer Institute.

2. Training for all staff – The researcher is looking at “training” as attendance to an AVID workshop or AVID Summer Institute. One of the AVID’s Administrator’s
had not attended any formal or informal training. All others on both site teams
had been to an AVID Summer Institute or an AVID workshop.

3. On the job coaching and mentoring – The researcher is considering the
“coaching” and “mentoring” as someone in the building that teachers can go to
for questions and answers. In both schools that was the AVID Coordinator.

4. Internal Management that established structures and procedures within the
program – That would be the AVID Administrators at both schools. Even though
at Remington the AVID Administrator was not there when the structures and
procedures were put into place, Arrow Smith’s AVID Administrator along with
the AVID coordinator’s help was able to make sure that the structures and
procedures that were in place remained intact.

5. Close community partnerships – The researcher viewed parent meetings and
faculty meetings where AVID information was disseminated as the school’s way
of partnering with the community. Although Remington did have some
community outreach, Arrow Smith attempted to bring in the community more
often and also frequently involved their students with their outreach programs.

6. Staff and program evaluation- The researcher regarded the AVID Center’s paper
work as the evaluation process that each school was required to go through and
both schools completed their paper work as requested by the AVID Center.

Another component of the AVID program that is valuable towards bridging the gap
was a research that focused on parental support and career choices. Students who were
economically disadvantaged often lived with people who did not encourage their students to
obtain a higher education (Diemer, 2007). The AVID program strongly encourages that
aspect, but when the support is hard to come by AVID has created a class that offers this component for them. The teacher in this class is placed in a position and encouraged to build a relationship with each AVID student.

Another component of the AVID program that is fundamental to the success of students is the expectation piece. Vroom’s expectancy theory rests on the premise that if individuals are encouraged and expected to perform, the student will more than likely work toward those high expectations (Vroom, V, 1964). Just like a relationship between a parent and a child, there must be a relationship between the students in the classroom and the teacher; this is not the student’s responsibility, this is the teacher’s responsibility and AVID provides that opportunity for the AVID elective teacher. If a student knows that the teacher actually likes him/her when that teacher explains his/her expectations to the student, they are more apt to listen and perform than they would otherwise. The fact that the AVID students are viewed as a cohort helps them build relationships with each other as well as with the teacher. Vroom’s expectancy theory definitely validates the commitment, understanding, and involvement that must be present within AVID’s administration’s implementation method.

Administrations’ Commitment to AVID

The research question in this study focused on different aspects of the program implementation that might explain the effectiveness of the AVID program in two high schools within the same county. The administration in each school responded to how their AVID implementation process was with regard to their commitment, understanding, and involvement in the AVID program implementation. The difference in implementation matters because when fidelity is not adhered to, the results of the program can be compromise. The researcher took note of the following two things that occurred at each high
school and at the district level. Remington that did not show fidelity to the implementation of the AVID program by:

- Students that wanted to stay in the program were allowed to do so, even if they did not do so well on their entrance interview process.
- AVID administrator also served as the AVID coordinator.
- Did not provide tutors for students.

Arrow Smith that did not show fidelity to the AVID program by:

- Assigning a person as the AVID administrator that did not have any formal or informal AVID training.

The district did not demonstrate fidelity to the AVID program by:

- Not providing internal structures and processes for the high schools.
- An evaluation process.
- On the job coaching and mentoring for the site team members.

Generating a setting that supports change may be the most significant approach for the successful implementation of a program. When putting a successful program implementation into practice, commitment, involvement, and understanding of and for the program is necessary.

The building administrators decide how much funding is allocated to meet the needs of the AVID program and what kinds of staff development are provided. Both principals believed that they were committed to the AVID program. Even though Mrs. Phillips, principal of Remington High School, had a higher overall percentage of students enrolled in the AVID program from 2011-2015, all of her AVID teachers taught one or more non-avid classes. Mrs. Harington, on the other hand, dedicated the AVID coordinator’s entire schedule
to the AVID program indicating that Mrs. Harington is willing to commit more money and staffing resources to the AVID program.

Both high schools had a change in the AVID coordinator’s position within the last four years. Arrow Smith’s AVID coordinator’s change occurred four years ago while Remington High School’s AVID coordinator’s position changed this year. Arrow Smith gained an AVID administrator this year while Remington High’s AVID administrator also became the AVID coordinator. The reason for the sudden change was not explained to the researcher. None of the AVID teachers in either high school quit teaching AVID, but both high schools had one or two teachers to join the AVID site team this year.

According to Rick DuFour (2004) a professional learning community is “a powerful new way of working together that profoundly affects the practices of schooling” (p. 6). It is important that the AVID administrators are a constant within the AVID site team, because the AVID site team is designed to work much like a professional learning community. The AVID administrator supports the enrollment of students in rigorous classes and teachers using the AVID strategies. Both high schools went through some changes in the administration area, and both changes were significant changes. One of the changes caused a person to play a dual role and both of those roles had a lot of responsibility. I did not see how the AVID Administrator also being the AVID coordinator negatively affected the AVID program at Remington High School for this year. He seemed to be on top of things, but if Mr. King remained with both positions, having a dual role could definitely have a negative impact on the program later on because of the many responsibilities that both positions entail. Because AVID clearly states these two positions as separate entities, Arrow Smith’s principal once again came out as being more committed to the program.
Another component towards demonstrating commitment to the AVID program is the communication piece in which Arrow Smith excelled. The communication of the AVID’s mission to the staff and students was another area in which the two high schools differed in delivery. Remington High gives the AVID information to students that would possibly qualify for the AVID program and the AVID students are asked to help with the parent meetings at the beginning of each semester by passing out AVID information. Not giving AVID information to all students impeding the program from going school wide. Arrow Smith gives the AVID information out to all students and their students serve as ambassadors at different functions throughout the year, promoting the program by speaking at informal gatherings about their AVID experiences. Remington’s method of disseminating AVID information out to the community does not help with growing the AVID program and for that reason it might be why the AVID program is so small.

Administration’s Understanding of AVID

The 2013 AVID: In Pursuit of Success Participant Handbook states that AVID’s mission is to close the achievement gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society. This process takes students that are normally not found in advanced classes and provides them with strategies that will enable them to become academically successful in advanced classes.

When examining data concerning the administrator’s understanding of the AVID program, it was apparent that both principals had some knowledge of the AVID program, but the person who was mostly responsible for making sure that the AVID program ran as needed was the AVID administrator. This emphasizes how important it is that the AVID
administrator is knowledgeable in all areas of the AVID program in order to properly implement the program.

At Arrow Smith High, the student selection followed the AVID guidelines, while Remington High did not. The AVID administrator at Remington had a little more experience than the AVID administrator at Arrow Smith. At Arrow Smith, the AVID administrator was new to the position, but had a strong AVID coordinator who knew what needed to be happening; the program was already up and running when he came into the picture. At Remington High, the AVID administrator had a lot of responsibilities, causing some details to not be as important as other details; after all, he was the AVID administrator and AVID coordinator, a position he came into rather suddenly. Another detail that was noticed was that after the researcher looked into the numbers of AVID graduates last year at Remington High, there was a one hundred percent graduation rate. There were ten AVID seniors and ten AVID seniors graduated. Nine of them had plans to go to college and one went into the armed forces. One hundred percent is good from the small group they had, but I wonder how many more than ten students could have been impacted by this program had the program been implemented with fidelity.

Administrator’s Involvement in AVID

AVID’s Decades of College Dreams: AVID College Readiness System (2014) states that a school is an AVID school when “a strong AVID system 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”. I don’t think that was the case with Remington High School. There were several components of the AVID program that were not implemented with fidelity. The data
shows that from Remington’s high school population of eight hundred and nineteen students, the AVID program only impacted 8.4% of the students’ population (AVID.org). I think Remington could have had impacted more students if the implementation process had been done with greater fidelity. Because Remington High was the one with the smallest student population, I was sure that the fidelity would have been in place, if only, because of the number of students in the general population, as well as the smaller number of AVID students involved in the AVID program, but that was not the case.

Both schools were attempting to get AVID school-wide within their building. Both Building administrators assigned their AVID program to their AVID administrator. The building administrator determines who will have a role within the AVID program, but the AVID administrator directly supervises the program. Both AVID administrators were at the site team meetings that I attended and they were knowledgeable about their AVID program. As for what their plan was if the program was not being properly implemented, both AVID administrators said they would let the building administrator know and that would be something she would handle. When the question was directed to the building administrators, their response was to speak to the person and find out what was going on.

When looking at the administrators and AVID coordinators for both high schools, a chart was created to explain the major findings for this study:

Chart Interpretation:
1 – WEAK - was not sure about some aspects of the AVID program.
2 – STANDARD – Demonstrated some knowledge of the AVID program.
3 – OUTSTANDING - committed, involved, and understood the AVID program.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Remington High School Rating (1-3)</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Arrow Smith High School Rating (1-3)</th>
<th>Quote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building Administrator Commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I would try to keep as much of the program....”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I attend the meetings when possible”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Administrator Understanding</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Getting teachers involved with AVID is more than ...but we try to make sure the right instructor is put in the right place.”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“These strategies that we use under the AVID name are just good sound teaching strategies.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Administrator Involvement</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I try to go to as many meetings as possible.”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“...coming to the AVID nights and AVID Banquet...going to the middle schools.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Administrator Commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I work diligently with the site team to make sure that students have what they need...”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I hope to go to ...a summer institute next summer.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Administrator Understanding</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“…not what the teachers and the students do but what we can do or not do to help our students and teachers.”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“I don’t know really what they do at the middle school, except talk to them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Administrator Involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“I make sure things are running as smoothly as possible within the AVID program.”</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“I help in some form or fashion with the AVID strategies ...during staff meetings.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVID Coordinator Commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Least favorite aspect is ...it targets a very small percentage of our population.”</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>“I enjoy going to the summer institutes because it provides me with the chance to chat with other AVID people.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Unexpected Findings

Something that caught me off guard was that Mrs. Harington, building administrator at Arrow Smith, committed a full-time teaching position to the AVID program, yet he assigned Mr. Stevenson as the AVID administrator who had no experience and had never been to an AVID summer institute; he only had knowledge of the AVID program. Another unexpected find was that Mrs. Phillips at Remington High School assigned her assistant principal as the AVID administrator and the AVID coordinator.

One more unexpected find was that Arrow Smith High was getting tutors from a college within the county but the other school was not. I understand that Remington High was not able to get “volunteers” for tutors but money was available from the county to pay for tutors and that option did not seem to be sought after. I can only assume the teachers did the tutoring that was needed for the students. When looking at the senior AVID data, Remington had eighteen out of nineteen (95%) of their AVID students that were college bound and Arrow Smith had twenty-five out of twenty-six (96%) of their AVID students on the college bound list. These numbers lead me to believe that if Remington High School’s
tutoring component had been implemented with fidelity, maybe the percentage could have been higher.

I did not expect to find that AVID implementation would vary so much within a district, especially just two high schools. I was not surprised that there were differences, but did not expect so many differences. Some of the variances that were encountered were components that are clearly explained in the AVID program guidelines. I think that in order for a program to be implemented successfully within a district four elements need to occur that were not occurring in these two high schools:

- Closer monitoring of each school from the district level.
- Staff development throughout the school year for AVID teachers.
- Shared data at least with the stakeholders.
- District AVID PLC created and meeting periodically throughout the year.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

Arrow Smith High is working diligently to build their AVID program. Their program follows AVID’s eleven essentials and seems to be growing. This high school has an AVID administrator, AVID coordinator, several AVID elective teachers, and an AVID counselor. It would be interesting to speak with Mr. Stevenson after he has attended the AVID Summer Institute to see if going to the Institute was a valuable experience, one that he wishes he could have had earlier or was it an Institute that did not provide him with the information that he needed.

Remington High is in the “youth” stages of growth. They are working on putting the right people in the right positions. Something else that would be worth revisiting at Remington High would be to observe in another year to see if any changes within the
program have occurred when a teacher becomes the AVID coordinator and not an administrator who is playing dual roles as the AVID administrator and as the AVID coordinator.

Another worthwhile research study would be to examine a cohort of students from the two middle schools that are feeder schools for Remington High School and Arrow Smith High School and study that cohort of students for what they found as helpful or different about the implementation process that made it different, better, or worse when it came to helping them become successful for the college world. Their beliefs as to whether or not they viewed the AVID program as a valuable part of keeping them on the right track for success and did the AVID data back it up.

Additionally, if the purpose of AVID is to reach the “forgotten middle”, then maybe these strategies should be used for all students. Research has shown that academic success for some students comes from small group instruction; I understand that component of the AVID program is not always feasible, but the AVID teaching strategies, such as WICOR, Cornell Notes, etc. should be readily available to all teachers and students. It would be interesting to research a county wanting to implement the AVID program but did not have the funds and the administration was familiar with the eleven AVID essentials to compare and contrast data concerning the implementation process and the results.

Finally, a research study using multiple high schools that would thoroughly investigate each of the AVID’s eleven essentials to find out which ones are crucial to the implementation process and which ones are not necessary to the implementation of the AVID program.
Suggestions for School Districts Offering AVID

Any administrator supervising the AVID program needs to be thoroughly knowledgeable in all the fundamentals that are required of the AVID program. Not only does the AVID administrator need to attend the AVID summer institute, but there should be someone in the county that informs the AVID administrators how it is to be run within the county so that everyone is following the same guidelines. Guidelines should be given to all high schools that specifically state what each essential should look like within the school. These essentials should not be optional but required so that when one student leaves a high school and goes to another high school within the county, this student can pick up where he/she left off and there are no surprises for the student, the parents, or the teachers.

Also, when the county is mandating that a program is to be implemented in all high schools within that county, there needs to be several professional development sessions required for all involved in order to make sure that the program is being successfully implemented. If the district believes in the program, there should be formal and informal classes that will be taught through learning, and applying the experience, not to mention substantial credit to make it worth the teacher’s time and effort. Within the AVID program there are several features, such as the tutorial classes, the WICOR notes, and the seminars that all teachers need to make sure a review is obtained throughout the year. Some teachers that could do an awesome job cannot leave for a week in the summer for the Institute, but they could attend a professional development class during the year and sometimes a refresher course is needed. It needs to be a mixture of county and in-house classes. It is important that a county mandating a program have training occasionally so that everyone is following the same course of action.
Conclusion

According to Watt et. al (2008) research, the AVID program is designed to assist those students from the “forgotten middle.” This study examined two high schools within the same county. The study dealt with the differences in the implementation process with regard to the AVID administration’s commitment, understanding, and involvement within the AVID program. The implementation process was different in each school. There were people assigned roles to the AVID program within each school that were not AVID trained for their role, therefore not AVID qualified. Finally, when comparing the program implementation in more than one school it was quite noticeable that one school had more resources and funding than the other one, creating a difficult first step to take when implementing the AVID program. The AVID program is definitely a program I think that is worthy of implementing, but with the implementation process comes an obligation to make sure that the students are being served as efficiently and effectively as possible from the district leader all the way to the AVID coordinator. The AVID curriculum focuses on building skills and developing behaviors that lead to success. It is a program that teaches important study skills and requires that they take an upper level class each semester. I believe that if AVID is implemented correctly for the individual school, AVID can impact students throughout the school. If trained AVID members understand, commit, and are involved with AVID strategies that help students acquire needed academic and behavioral skills that will follow them to college, the educational mission has been accomplished. I have come to realize that if AVID is used as an educational tool as it is meant to be used, the implementation procedure may vary from school to school, but all the components of the AVID program will be present allowing for the fidelity of the implementation process to be present and evident throughout the schools,
producing a more school that impacts many students. To further explain the results from this study, the chart below summarizes the answer to the research question:

Table 9: Further Clarification to the research question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the differences in the implementation of the AVID program with regard to AVID Administrator/Coordinator</th>
<th>Remington High School</th>
<th>Arrow Smith High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMMITMENT</td>
<td>1. No AVID Counselor. 2. No staff development 3. Had very little money available 4. New AVID Admin that was also the AVID Coordinator 5. Only students that might qualify are given the AVID information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td>1. Informs teachers of AVID information shared via emails 2. AVID Website was not updated 3. Did not follow the AVID guidelines for student selection</td>
<td>1. Working on becoming a demonstration school 2. Had a recruitment process for middle school students 3. Updated AVID Website 4. Followed the AVID guidelines for student selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INVOLVEMENT</td>
<td>1. Active AVID Site Team 2. Attended Site team meetings when possible</td>
<td>1. Active AVID Site Team 2. Attended Site team meetings when possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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APPENDIX A - School Administrator Letter

Department of Leadership, Policy, and Adult and Higher Education
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695

Month day, 2016

Dear Mr. ____________.

I am a doctoral student at ____________________________ under the supervision of Faculty member ________________. I am conducting a research on the aspects of the AVID Implementation at the high school level, with the goal focusing on the implementation differences of the program at the school level. This study will not generate data that will be able to make definitive determinations, but allow theories to be developed about the connection between the AVID administrator’s, and the AVID teacher’s understanding and level of commitment to the success of the AVID program.

I would like to interview you and your AVID Coordinator. The results for my study will be accessible only to the researcher. If allowed, AVID student data will be provided by the AVID Center and/or AVID Coordinator. Student identification will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. I will replace all names with code numbers.

At any time, any individuals may withdraw consent from participating in the study without consequence. There are some professional risks when agreeing to participate in this study. Group results of this study will be available in the spring of December, 2017. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me at ________________ or my faculty advisor __________________________ at ____________________________.

Sincerely,
Denise Luper
Appendix B - AVID Administrator Interview Questions

1. Who is on your AVID site team and how were they selected?
2. How often does the site team meet and how is it utilized?
3. Please describe the AVID Program in your building.
4. How are new AVID teachers selected at your school?
5. What was the process leading to you becoming the AVID administrator?
6. How involved are you with decisions regarding your AVID program?
7. How involved were you with the decisions regarding funding and hiring of your coordinator/teacher?
8. If this position is cut, how do you foresee meeting the needs of AVID-eligible students and preparing them to take the AVID elective?
9. How do you envision the role of the following individuals with regard to AVID?
   a. Coordinator
   b. Site Team
   c. Students
10. What steps have you taken to share your vision of the AVID program with the following individuals?
    a. AVID teacher/coordinator
    b. AVID site team
11. How do you support the AVID teachers with program implementation?
    a. What steps do you have in place if you find that the program is not being properly implemented?
12. The AVID program requires that each AVID student take a minimum of one honors class. What requirement do you have regarding the honors class that your AVID students take?
    a. How many honors classes?
b. Does the class have to be a core class or can it be an elective class?

c. Who meets with the students to choose the honors class(es)?

13. Is information collected on your AVID students, how do you share the information, and how is it used to update instruction methods?

14. How is AVID’s mission communicated to the student body and staff?

15. Do you see AVID strategies used by other teachers or students in your building?

   a. If so, what strategies?
   b. If so, what steps are in place to share these strategies with the rest of the staff?

16. How is AVID information shared with your community?
Appendix C - AVID Coordinator/Teacher Interview Questions

1. Could you describe in as much detail as possible how you became an AVID teacher?

2. Have you received any AVID training sessions, other than the summer institute?

3. When was the last time you attended the summer institute?

4. Some people feel that the AVID program takes away from a student’s extracurricular involvements. How do you respond to that statement?

5. Describe your role as the AVID teacher, including relationships with administrators, peers, parents, and students.

6. How closely do you adhere to the AVID curriculum? Explain a typical day in your AVID class?

7. Tell whether your teaching practices have changed as a result of AVID.

8. How do you think AVID impacts the students in your classroom and do you feel personally responsible for your AVID student’s success?

9. Do you feel it puts more pressure on you as the AVID teacher, developing such personal relationships with your students?

10. Have your expectations of students changed since you began teaching AVID?

11. Is there anything you would like to see changed within the AVID program? How do you feel these changes would impact the program?

12. How often does the site team meet and how is it utilized?

13. What are your favorite and least favorite aspects of the AVID program?

14. Do you have any advice for prospective AVID teachers?

15. Tell me about the de-selection process for AVID students.
Appendix D - Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study
North Carolina State University - Raleigh, NC

This consent information is valid September 22, 2016 through September 22, 2017

AVID Coordinator and Principal

Title of Study - Leaders Implementation of the AVID program at the High School Level

Researcher - Denise Luper

Introduction

- You are being asked to be in a research study that deals with the implementation of the AVID program.
- You were selected as a possible participant because you are the AVID Coordinator.
- Please read this form & ask any questions you have before agreeing to be in the study.

Purpose of Study

- The purpose of this study is to examine what aspects regarding the AVID program implementation explain some of the differences within two high schools.

Description of the Study Procedures

- If you agree to participate in this study, you will be interviewed in reference to how the AVID program is implemented at your school. The interview should take no longer than 1 hour and will be audio recorded.

Risks and Benefits

- There are some professional risks associated with participating in this research. There are no direct benefits for participating in this research; however, 2 indirect benefits are:
  - Identifying significant components that could help improve the AVID Program
  - Increasing professional network.

Confidentiality

- The information for this research will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. The interviews will be made through the use of an audio recording and once I have transcribed, they will be saved in a password protected word document on a password protected computer. The recordings will be deleted once the transcription process is complete. I will use a fictitious name to refer to you & your school.

Compensations

- There will be no compensations provided for participating in this research.
Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns
- The decision to participate in this study is entirely up to you. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time without penalty
- You have the right to not answer any question, as well as to withdraw completely from the interview at any point during the process.
- If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call Deb Paxton, Director of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection for Human Subjects, at 919-515-4514.
- If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Denise Luper @ dlluper@ncsu.edu.

Consent to Participate:
“I have read & understand the above information. I will receive a copy of this form if I ask for one. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I understand that by choosing to proceed with the study, I agree to consent to these terms.”

Research Subject (either AVID Coordinator OR Principal) Signature:
_______________________________ DATE: ____________

Researcher Signature:
_______________________________ DATE: ____________