

Kern County Schoolwide Workshop I

Breakout Session Summaries

AVID Counseling

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Walt is the head counselor and the AVID counselor at North HS, and his years of experience make him the perfect conduit of information for all things AVID. Below is the agenda he worked up for the session and a few points he made after each bulleted item on the agenda.

- Being an AVID counselor & relationship with AVID teachers
 - “Teachers are an extension of the counselor.”
 - Teachers should be careful not to take on too much of counselor’s job.
 - Teachers must understand the college-going system.
 - Counselors must work with all teachers of AVID students.
 - Develop trust with AVID teachers. Get out! Get involved!
 - Establish an “open-door” policy with AVID students.
 - Teachers and counselors must model collaboration for students.
- AVID SLC (Small Learning Community)
 - AVID is its own PLC at North HS and meets quite regularly.
 - AVID has become a part of many of the SLC’s at North HS.
- Recruiting and student selection pitfalls
 - Sites often fail to establish a working relationship with feeder schools. Counselor AND Site Coordinator should visit feeder schools to recruit.
 - The recruitment process is often truncated or shortened to fit teachers’ schedules. The process should be a full day: an informative talk with all qualified students, discussion of packet of materials, interviews, deadline for signed contract, etc.
 - Administrators are not urged strongly enough to create new sections so that ALL qualified AVID students are able to have an AVID class.
 - The importance of the successful completion of algebra before the freshman year is not stressed enough, and the math teachers at the feeder schools and high schools do not communicate enough. The algebra requirements at the two schools must be comparable so that consistency can be achieved.
- Increasing parental involvement
 - The counselor must work closely with the AVID Site Team to get parents involved and keep them involved through Family Night activities, field trips on which parents are chaperons, Site Team duties for parents, etc.

- Tutorials and tutors
 - The counselor must take an active role in helping the Site Team identify, train, and place tutors: cross-grade, college, staff.
- ACT and SAT exams
 - The counselor can help a great deal in helping AVID students acquire waivers for the exams if they are available.
 - The counselor can also help disseminate testing information.
- UC/CSU A-G issues
 - The counselor can help students complete their 4, 5, or 6-year plan and help keep them on track as they progress through the grades.
 - Students can keep themselves on track, with the counselor's help, by informing themselves through the UC Mentor and CSUB Mentor websites.
- “Maintaining academic momentum”
 - Walt coined this phrase to refer to the rigor in AVID classes that must be established and maintained throughout all grade levels.
- Overcoming the stumbling blocks for chemistry and Algebra 2
 - The counselor must monitor AVID students' progress in these classes to determine if problems arise so that the Site Team can take the proper steps.
- Middle school AVID student transition to high school
 - The counselor, along with the Site Team, must keep a watchful eye on any interesting anomalies that might arise during the transition phase for freshmen AVID students. As the academic rigor increases, the tension and frustration should not become overwhelming. We must be supportive!

When asked about the “duties” of an AVID counselor, Walt offered up the list below.

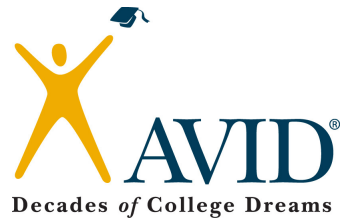
- The counselor should “tag” AVID students in the school's data system.
- Be an advocate for the student. Become familiar with the student's background, family situation, and any other circumstances affecting the student's progress.
- Be a stickler for grade checks. Become familiar with trends in AVID students' academic performance.
- Make family/parent involvement an important part of AVID.
- Establish direct contact with the AVID student first, then take “next steps” concerning academic and personal challenges.

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AP Teachers

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The AP teachers took time out of their busy school day to address the group. Their message concerned the connection between AVID and AP and what AVID teachers can do to help to ensure their students' success in AP courses. Below are some of the main points that came up in the discussion and the question and answer session that followed.

- AVID and AP teachers at North HS keep in close contact. This is very important for not only monitoring of grades but also for the discussion of what AVID teachers and Site Team Members can do to help AVID students meet the rigors of AP courses.
- One of the main messages that the AP teachers delivered was that AVID students do well in AP courses *with our support*. They placed special emphasis on the support issue; we must monitor student success in AP courses and deliver instruction in AVID elective courses that addresses the challenges they might face in AP courses.
- AVID students do persevere in AP courses at North HS. At the current time, ALL AVID students who enrolled in AP courses at the start of the year are still in the classes; this is a very positive sign! AVID students at North HS typically do not drop the courses, and this is due to the hard work and dedication of all AVID Site Team Members.
- AVID has turned skeptics into believers among the teaching staff at North HS due to the hard work of the Site Coordinator and the support of the administration. Regular communication among staff members has also been a key component of this success.
- The fact that the AVID students do not want to disappoint the AVID teachers has played a very important role in AVID student success at this school. The rapport the AVID teachers have with their students is exemplary and continues to be a big part of AVID success at North HS.
- AVID and AP have the same goal . . . college preparation!

