

EDUCATION

Heaton shows off its AVID progress

Showcase for its college readiness program

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As far as preparing students to work hard and dream big, Heaton Middle School is progressing “avidly.”

Heaton is one of several Pueblo City Schools (D60) that embraces the philosophy of AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination).

This dynamic program uses proven practices to prepare students — especially those underrepresented in higher education — for success in college and a career.

Recently certified as one of the district’s AVID schools, Heaton is now on track to become an AVID Demonstration Site — a prestigious distinction in that there are only 155 such sites in the country.

As an insight into AVID as well as successful ways to implement it, Principal Jayme Cardinal hosted a showcase Tuesday, attended by administrators from D60 and Pueblo County School District 70, as well as the Huerfano and Harrison school districts, a Denver charter school and Colorado State University-Pueblo.

Also in attendance to observe was Gordon Mosher III, a program manager for AVID’s

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western division, who is very pleased with the AVID advancement at the school.

“Becoming a demonstration site is a very rare occurrence,”

Mosher said, “kind of an invitation-only event. So that’s for schools that really go above and beyond.

“And I’m very impressed with what’s going on here. The students are engaged in rigorous discussion, they’re utilizing high-yield strategies to access the curriculum and they’re doing a great job.”

At Heaton, AVID is both an elective class (210 students take it) and an overall strategy. And in both test scores, particularly math, and student morale, the endeavor has made a significant impact.

“What I like about the AVID program is that it helps me stay organized and makes me want to pursue more and achieve more,” said Hananiah Montoya, a sixth-grader. “It’s a great elective and really inspiring.

“I want to go to college and become an interior designer/real estate agent. And

AVID helps me want to achieve those dreams.”

Jace Barger, a seventh-grader, finds the AVID tutorial sessions particularly helpful.

“I get to get rid of some of my confusion about any of my classes through TRF, which is a tutorial request form,” Jace said. “That basically gives you the chance to get in a group of six or seven and talk about what is confusing you.”

These tutoring sessions, Cardinal explained, are overseen by students from CSU-Pueblo.

The process to become a demo site, Cardinal said, will likely last a year, overseen by AVID officials who will review the school’s progress and ultimately award the demo site designation.

“It’s a matter of putting processes in place, following the 11 AVID essentials. There is a rubric we have to grade ourselves on, under those essentials, such as preparing kids for college.

“But I’m very confident that we will become a demonstration site. I have an amazing staff, an amazing group of kids and this will be an amazing thing for Pueblo.”

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