



Advancement Via Individual Determination

NEWS RELEASE

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AVID Center

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Record Numbers Attend AVID National Conference

Educators gather to improve access, equity, and college readiness for all students

SAN DIEGO—The 2013 AVID National Conference, titled “Leading the Way to College Success,” was held in Grapevine, TX, at the Gaylord Texan Convention Center from December 12–14, 2013. The tenth annual conference drew a record attendance, with more than 1,600 educators. Attendees came from across the U.S. and around the world, including teachers and administrative personnel from the public and private school sector of primary and secondary grades as well as higher education faculty and educators.

A total of 74 sessions covering 10 key topics provided attendees with a breadth and depth of experienced practitioners and researchers who shared their knowledge and best practices. Topics included: Leadership for College Readiness; Schoolwide College Readiness; Acceleration and Rigor; Equity; Common Core; Data, Research, and Evaluation for College Readiness; Cognition for College Readiness/Brain Research; Advancing the AVID Elective; AVID College Readiness System; and 21st Century Skills.

Highlights of the conference included a feature-length documentary screening and session on Graham Streeter’s film [*Boys in Peril*](#), a true story about three Latino males and their plans and challenges after leaving high school.

A featured speaker at the conference was **Dr. David Conley**, whose pre-session addressed the topic of what it takes for students to succeed in postsecondary education. He is a professor of Educational Policy and Leadership; founder/director of the Center for Educational Policy Research (CEPR) at the University of Oregon; and founder/former CEO of the Educational Policy and Improvement Center (EPIC). Conley’s latest book, *Getting Ready for College, Careers and the Common Core: What Every Educator Needs to Know*, was released earlier this year.

The conference keynote speaker was **Dr. Mark Milliron**, who is known as a champion for education opportunity and a catalyst for conversations on innovation and the road ahead. He is currently co-founder and chief learning officer for [Civitas Learning](#) (Austin, TX). He is an award-winning author, speaker, and consultant who works with universities, community colleges, K–12 schools, foundations, corporations, associations, and government agencies across the country and around the world. Dr. Milliron spoke about the opportunity of “education as a game-changer” for the lives of many students, and talked about the ways educators need to incorporate technology in order to engage and meet the changing learning styles of students.

On Saturday during a breakfast, participants heard from a panel of eight students who represented the AVID College Readiness System from elementary through college. Area students came from Irving ISD and Garland ISD. Rounding out the panel was an AVID alumna who is currently a student at Texas Tech University, an AVID *for* Higher Education campus.

This was the last National Conference to be hosted by Executive Director Jim Nelson, who is stepping down in January after nearly eight years of overseeing the expansion of AVID across the country and the globe. Nelson will be returning to Austin, TX, where he will continue to be an AVID advocate in the area of public education policy. Nelson was the first executive director to lead AVID following Mary Catherine Swanson, AVID's founder. Nelson had the honor of introducing Jonathan Grant Brown, a former AVID student whom Nelson met as a student speaker when he first joined the organization. On Thursday evening, the University of Texas of the Permian Basin President David Watts presented Brown with his master's degree, which was officially conferred upon him on Saturday morning at the university.

The National Conference was made possible with generous support from Texas Instruments, College Board, ACT, Inc., and Cambridge International Examinations.

The 2014 National Conference "Committed Leadership + Dedicated Educators = STUDENT SUCCESS" will be held in Orlando, FL, on December 11–13. Registration for the event will open in May 2014.

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About AVID

AVID is a global, non-profit, proven college readiness system that closes the achievement gap "by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society." Today, AVID is implemented in approximately 4,900 schools in 45 states, the District of Columbia, and 16 countries/territories and impacts more than 700,000 students in K–12 and in 41 higher education institutions. The AVID *for* Higher Education Teacher Preparation Initiative (TPI) infuses AVID frameworks, methodologies, and strategies into college of education programs.

For more information, visit www.avid.org.