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AVID program seeks to close opportunity gaps

BY DAVID HOLCOMB
For the Keizertimes

If you keep up with things happening in our local schools, you may have seen or heard the word AVID and wondered what it means. AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. It is an elective class that is offered at all Salem-Keizer middle and high schools, including both Claggett Creek and Whiteaker Middle Schools, and McNary High School.

In the AVID elective, students receive the additional academic, social, and emotional support that will help them succeed, not only in high school, but also in their future college and career paths. This support comes from both their AVID elective teacher and classmates. The AVID elective gives students a class period built into their day to develop skills such as note-taking, organization, and collaboration. In addition, they receive the time and support to complete the steps necessary to be college ready, such as college and scholarship applications. Students in the AVID elective also participate in tutorials each week where they get help in their academic classes.

So, what type of student is an AVID student? Many students possess a desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard, but they may need additional guidance and support to be college-ready. AVID provides that support. Often AVID students will be the first in their families to attend college or are from groups who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. McNary AVID students take rigorous courses (such as Advanced Placement

or Dual Credit), explore college and career options, and participate in school and community activities. To join AVID, students must apply and participate in an interview.

AVID was first implemented at McNary in 2008 with one AVID elective class. Since then we have grown to 10 elective classes with approximately 260 students. In addition to the elective classes, AVID classroom activities, teaching practices, and academic behaviors are implemented school-wide. AVID instructional strategies in WICOR (Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading) are used in all classes to develop academic skills and promote critical thinking. Each student experiences the support, encouragement, and accountability necessary to pursue their dreams beyond high school.

AVID's mission is "to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college readiness and success in a global society." Similarly, McNary's mission states that we are "bold enough to be the best at educating, nurturing, and inspiring." Whether a student is in the AVID elective or not, the AVID framework of instruction, systems, leadership, and culture provides all McNary students with the skills and knowledge to be college and career ready.

AVID is more than just a class on a student's schedule; AVID is a culture and a family. At McNary High School, we strive to support every student in their academic and personal journey so that they can reach their full potential.



AVID students in a study session at McNary High School

Photo courtesy DAVID HOLCOMB

Keizer man retires, turns 70 on same day

BY BEE FLINT
Of the Keizertimes

Local Keizer resident Steve Pfaff celebrated his retirement and 70th birthday on April 13. Pfaff has been working at Willamette Lutheran Retirement Community for more than 26 years as their finance director and office manager.

"As a junior in high school, I think they were trying to give me some direction," Pfaff said. "They felt like I would be administrative and I seemed to do well with numbers. They put me in a bookkeeping class and that was it. That's when I decided that that's what I wanted to do."

Pfaff has been a very active member in the community as well. He became involved with the Keizer Chamber of Commerce and joined the board of directors a few years later. He then became the vice president, and finally president, of the board of directors soon after.

Starting in 1993, Pfaff was the chairman for the Iris Festival Parade and continued doing that for 14 years.

Pfaff was inspired to volunteer by his mom and from church. Growing up, his mom would volunteer in the community and visit nursing homes.

"That's what you do, serve other people and help out," he said.

Pfaff plans to stay in Keizer and keep himself occupied with things like gardening, going on bike rides and playing the piano.

"I'm looking forward to retiring," he said. "It's gonna be a little hard though. I put my notice in like five months ago and now I'm starting to think, okay, I'm not gonna be here anymore or what's that going to be like after being here for so long."

Although unsure about what the future brings, Pfaff feels better knowing that he has a plan for his retirement and is proud of the work he has put into his job.



Steve Pfaff

Photo by BEE FLINT of the Keizertimes