

**AVID from page 1A**

organizing and collaboration. It's meant to help students who have been doing "just enough" to get by.

"Speaking as someone who was at that level, sometimes it's just apathy," Perry said about the types of students AVID aims to help. "Ideally, we're talking about 2.0s and above, with average to higher test scores on their eighth-grade assessments."

It's not that the students lack the ability to earn higher grades; they often just don't have the motivation, confidence or knowledge to succeed.

"They don't have the mindset," Moser said. "A freshman may not have the mindset that they can take an honors level class. It's just the confidence to actually push themselves. Those who are in the honors classes are students who have that motivation."

And many times, that motivation is provided by parents who have already been through the higher education system.

"Most of our kids who do really well have college-educated parents," Tatum said. "Many of those kids are going to go to college no matter what. They're going to go, they're going to apply, and we have the classes to support them. They're going to do it in spite of us. AVID is really for the next level of kids. The ones that don't have the support at home, or that intrinsic motivation. It's focusing on those first-generation, college going kids. It's someone whose parents never had to fill out a FASA, or a scholarship application. They've never filled out a college application."

In terms of graduation, Siuslaw High School has been improving graduation and completion rates over the years. As for four-year graduates, the school had dipped to a rate of 59.7 percent in 2011 but grew to 85.4 percent in 2017. The statewide four-year graduation rate for 2017 was 76.7 percent. Five-year completion rates for the school rose to 93 percent for 2017, compared to 83.2 percent statewide.

"This is not just about graduation, but what's going to happen after graduation," Tatum said. "And that's a conversation that needs to start happening early."

To begin to look past graduation, students need to look at the studying strategies they're currently deploy-

ing in high school, and the types of courses they sign up for.

"The point of AVID is for kids to take rigorous academic classes," Perry said. "The kids that we've targeted for the program are kids who want to take those courses, but maybe they get into the sophomore year and they're sitting in that honors class and they realize they don't have all the study strategies they need. They don't have the academic background they need to be successful."

While Siuslaw has a bevy of advanced courses in its roster that could count toward a four-year university — a student can graduate with up to 90 credits towards a four-year bachelor's degree if they take the right courses — AVID is not solely focused on a four-year degree.

"A lot of kids might not want to do that," Perry said. "Maybe there's a trade or vocation that they want to go in to. Giving them the opportunity to keep all those doors open is really important. Your freshman year, you can shut a lot of doors if you're not careful. The whole point for AVID is to keep all those doors open and make sure you have the skills you need if you choose to keep those skills moving forward."

To get into the program, students have to apply and go through an interview process.

"The biggest thing I looked for when we did the interviews was motivation," Perry said. "How motivated are you to improve? The students

had to have recommendations from their teachers. We're trying to find kids who aren't afraid of the work.

are coming, begging me, 'I need more students, and I don't want to get it dropped,'" he said. "This year,

never had anybody show up who was in an AVID class who was like, 'Finally, I'm done with it.' We actually had two of them come to a board meeting with us and helped us advocate to get the AVID program, because they felt so strongly about it. That's when it clicked for me, that this must be a program worth having and that works."

Siuslaw began sending teachers for official training in AVID, with the official first class beginning this school year in both the high and middle schools.

At the high school, the first project that the class worked on was organizing school materials.

"Organization is one of the biggest barriers to high school success," Perry, who teaches the class, said. "A

**"We're in the halls ... having good conversations with the students. Telling the kids 'Hi' and asking what they did this weekend. It's making the conscious effort to do it, and doing it every day, every period and getting to know people. ... I don't want to say we're going to 'turn it around,' because I feel our culture is great. But we're bumping it up a notch."**

— Kerri Tatum,  
Siuslaw High School Principal

Well, maybe they're a little bit afraid of the work, but they're willing to be pushed towards it. They're going to start pulling their own weight. The grades are a factor, but there has to be a willingness to learn. That's the most important thing to me."

While the official AVID program is only now being introduced in the high school, many of the core principles have been introduced into the school through the Future Success program, began by Perry after reviewing some of the AVID tenants in other schools.

"We taught our students a bunch of note-taking strategies and social-emotional strategies," he said. "So, every kid is getting those strategies. I'm seeing it now with my junior English students who were in Future Success. They have built more skills which we're trying to see."

For Moser, he has already seen improvements in student skills and a rise in honor class placement since the Future Success program was initiated.

"Typically, the honors teachers

it's 'Let me know if there's someone else taking this, because I'm running out of desks.' It's such a positive shift."

At the same time, transfer students who were apart of AVID in other school districts were requesting the program.

"When they figured out that we didn't have AVID at school, they were devastated," Moser said. "I've

lot of students have 'black hole backpack syndrome,' where everything goes in there and you never see it again. We have a giant three-inch binder that is separated for each of their classes with planners and all the materials they need."

To fill those binders, the educators are teaching students note-taking skills, what to write down in class, how to organize them and what to follow when they're studying.

Next, the students are working on creating a network of peer-to-peer help for their academic classes, focusing on finding study partners within their class.

"We talked about what goes into being a good study partner," Perry said. "Being reliable, being motivated, being a good listener and having some sort of chemistry. So, we had them go out and find classmates that exemplify that. So now, if they miss class or have a problem, they have a resource to draw from."

See AVID page 10A



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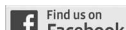
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# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## Business Planning

**Y**our business should not be put on the back-burner when instituting an emergency preparedness plan. If you are responsible for employees it is your job to make sure your staff members are equipped with the knowledge and capabilities to protect themselves in the face of a disaster.

Simply knowing what to do won't cut it. Your employees need regular training and reminders of standard operating procedures related to your company's emergency plan.

**WHY TEST YOUR PLAN?**

Putting your plan to the test will help you find out if it is ready to stand up to a high-stress emergency. Don't think of your test in terms of pass or fail, but focus on improving your plan piece by piece for a more effective comprehensive program. There may be simple fixes you are overlooking that can make your plan a bit more stable, which can make all of the difference in a dangerous situation.

**HOW TO TEST YOUR PLAN**

Testing doesn't have to mean full-blown exercises in which you simulate every possible emergency situation. You have a business to run, and putting that much time into executing "mock" disasters probably isn't an effective use of time. Set brief, regular meetings instead. Elicit feedback from your staff to improve your plans, while continually reinforcing their knowledge of procedures, systems and equipment. Keeping an open dialogue on emergency planning also can make sure everyone is on the same page.

**ARE YOU READY?**

Ready Rating is a free American Red Cross service that helps businesses, schools and organizations become prepared for disasters. Members of the program are privy to extensive resources, tools and expert advice that can help them improve their ability to withstand disaster while

maintaining operations and keeping their employees and customer safe. Visit [readyrating.org](http://readyrating.org) for information.



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