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AVID/TOPS Evaluation



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About the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative

The Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) is housed at the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. WEC's team of evaluators supports youth-serving organizations and initiatives through culturally responsive and rigorous program evaluation. Learn more at <http://www.wec.wceruw.org>.

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Section I

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

AVID/TOPS is a collaborative partnership between the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dane County (BGCDC). AVID/TOPS aims to increase academic achievement, college preparation, and postsecondary educational access for students in the academic middle who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

MMSD and BGCDC partnered with the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) to conduct an assessment of the AVID/TOPS program in high school and college. This document summarizes findings from the 2022-23 evaluation, including cohort analyses of AVID/TOPS impacts on end-of-high school and postsecondary outcomes, cross-sectional analyses of impacts on ninth through twelfth grade students during the 2018-19 through 2021-22 school years, findings from student focus groups at the four AVID/TOPS high schools, and the results of student and staff surveys focusing on satisfaction with AVID/TOPS and its college and career readiness components.

Methodology

WEC estimated program effects using propensity score matching. This statistical method matches AVID/TOPS and non-AVID/TOPS students according to their individual probabilities of high school AVID/TOPS participation, which are based on eighth grade, pre-participation academic and demographic characteristics. WEC matched groups of students within cohort and high school and ensured proper balance of eighth grade academic and demographic characteristics across the AVID/TOPS and comparison groups. WEC then used multivariate regression to

estimate differences in outcomes between AVID/TOPS and comparison students. It should be noted that, while this methodology allows us to “control” for a comprehensive array of academic and demographic pre-program information that would otherwise bias estimates of program impact, remaining bias from other preexisting, but unobserved, factors is still possible. The analysis therefore bears this risk in absence of better strategies for estimating program effects.

Findings

AVID/TOPS' primary goal is to improve postsecondary participation and achievement. Evaluation findings show that the program achieved this goal. AVID/TOPS students, relative to a similar group of comparison students, are substantially more likely to enroll in college in the first fall after high school completion, persist in college, and earn an associate (AA) or bachelor's degree (BA) within six years.¹

Figure 1 shows that AVID/TOPS students were much more likely than comparison students to enroll in college in the first fall after graduating from high school. For cohorts entering ninth grade between 2010-11 and 2018-19, AVID/TOPS students were 17.05 percentage points more likely to enroll in their first fall after completion. AVID/TOPS and comparison group differences were slightly larger for subgroups, including percentage point differences greater than 20 for low-income students (those receiving free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL)) and students of color (SOC) receiving FRPL. All estimates of postsecondary enrollment impacts are statistically significant.

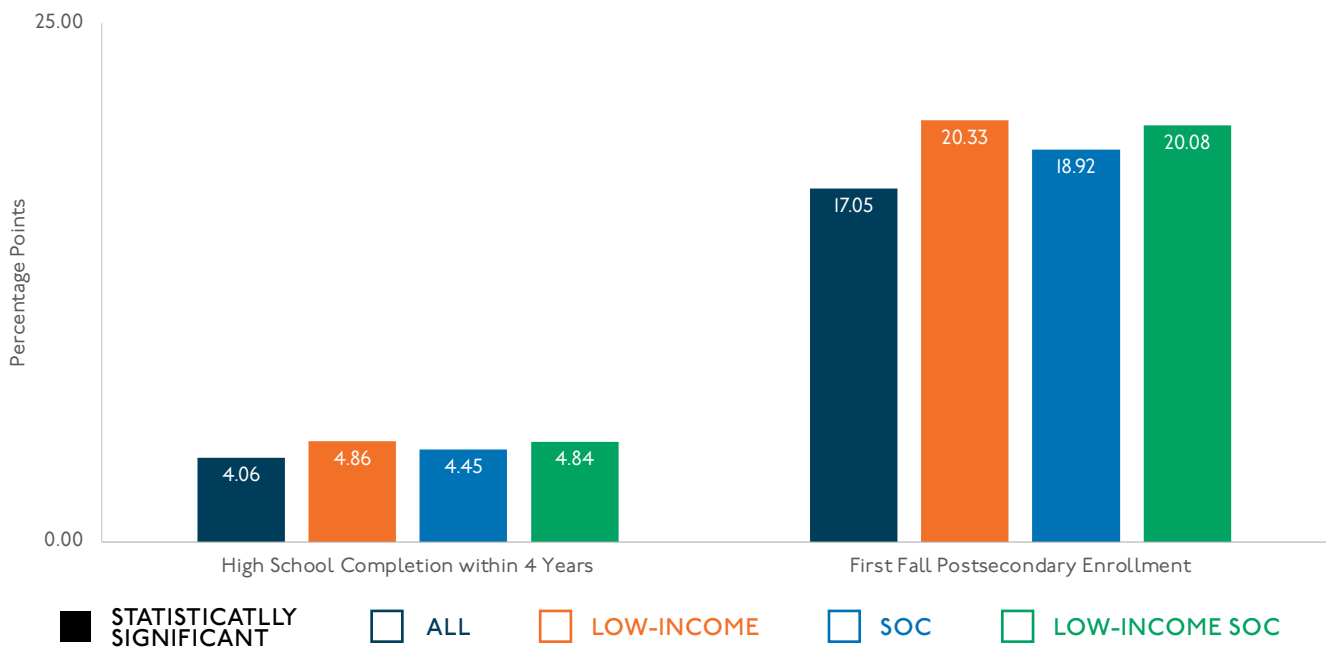
¹ Throughout, statistical significance is measured at the 0.05 level.

The impact estimates in Figure I are consistent with student focus group statements reporting that AVID/TOPS gave them skills in and out of the classroom and prepared them for life after high school. Students also praised AVID/TOPS' help with college applications, meeting application deadlines, giving students time to apply for college, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and as one student said, "It really pushed you, gives you an equal opportunity ... I wouldn't be aware of the opportunities that were out there if it wasn't for AVID."

One of the reasons that AVID/TOPS students were more likely to enroll in college is that they graduated from high school at higher rates, as shown in Figure I. AVID/TOPS students were 4.06 percentage points more likely to graduate from high school within four years, relative to the comparison group. Only 4.40 percent of the AVID/TOPS sample failed to graduate within four years, about half the rate of the comparison group (8.46 percent). This strong association between AVID/TOPS and improved high school completion was repeated across students of color, students who receive FRPL, and students of color who also receive FRPL. These results are all statistically significant.

Figure I: AVID/TOPS Impact on High School Completion and Postsecondary Enrollment

Full Sample, Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



For both high school completion and postsecondary enrollment, students who participated in all four years of AVID/TOPS had improved outcomes relative to students who participated less.

The evaluation also examined postsecondary persistence and completion. For these outcomes, WEC limited the sample to students who enrolled in college. As seen in Figure 2, AVID/TOPS students were 7.83 percentage points more likely than comparison students to persist in college, a statistically significant result. Consistent with AVID/TOPS' equity mission, differences in persistence were similar for students of color (8.66 percentage points), students receiving FRPL (7.53 percentage points), and students of color receiving FRPL (8.18 percentage points). There is some evidence (not shown) that during the pandemic, postsecondary persistence decreased slightly across MMSD, but AVID/TOPS and comparison students experienced similar decreases.

Figure 2: AVID/TOPS Impact on Postsecondary Persistence and Bachelor's Degree Attainment

Secondary Sample, Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

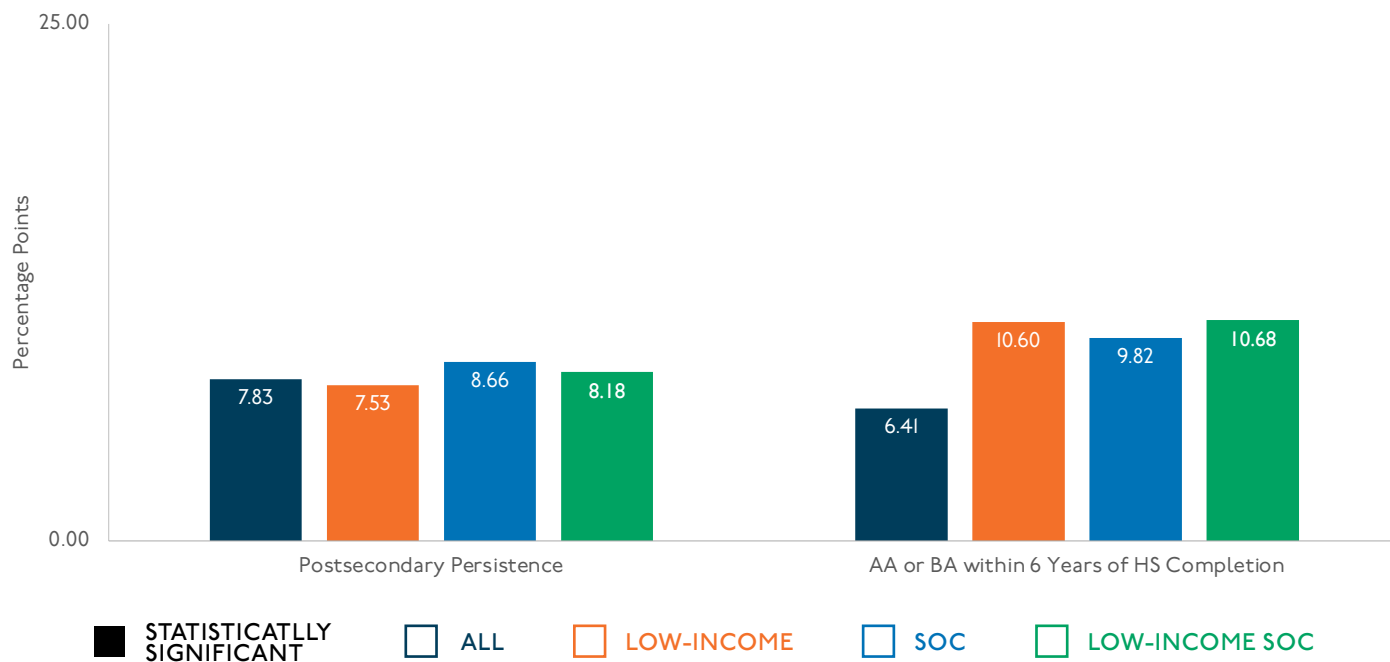


Figure 2 also shows that, relative to the comparison group, AVID/TOPS students were 6.41 percentage points more likely to complete an AA or BA degree within six years of high school completion. These impacts were even greater for low-income students, students of color, and low-income students of color, demonstrating AVID/TOPS' success at narrowing existing achievement gaps.

There is some evidence that AVID/TOPS improves student achievement during high school (see Figures 10 and 11 below), although these outcomes are secondary relative to postsecondary enrollment and completion. The evaluation finds that, relative to the comparison group, AVID/TOPS students on average earned 0.48 more Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors credits. These estimated differences were slightly larger for students of color and students receiving FRPL, although none of the differences are statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison students' GPAs at the end of high school.

In addition to the impact results above, to provide data for continuous improvement, AVID/TOPS requested cross-sectional analyses of achievement, attendance, disciplinary, and ACT outcomes for academic years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. Point estimates of the AVID/TOPS impact on these outcomes were generally positive, although none of the results are statistically significant.

The results from student focus groups and surveys of satisfaction distributed to AVID/TOPS staff and students indicated high levels of satisfaction with both the program overall and many of the program components. Both staff and students responded with high satisfaction for college field trips, AVID/TOPS services, and career development by TOPS. One area of low satisfaction among staff respondents that may benefit from a further examination is schoolwide family outreach.

Taken as a whole, the findings in this report suggest that AVID/TOPS' culture and community, along with its college preparation and support during college, are driving the program's success with narrowing achievement gaps in postsecondary achievement. Large impacts on postsecondary enrollment and high school graduation imply that the high school portion of AVID/TOPS has been very successful. Likewise, large impacts on persistence and completion imply success in both the high school and college components of AVID/TOPS. However, we find much less evidence that AVID/TOPS impacts intermediate high school outcomes such as GPA, course-taking, and ACT scores. Postsecondary impacts without intermediate high school achievement impacts, though opposing on their face, are consistent with an explanation that the culture and community that AVID/TOPS builds are the mechanisms behind the program's impacts. The results are also consistent with AVID's stated framework that seeks to change school culture and systems along with providing academic support. In fact, students most value the non-academic components of AVID/TOPS. During focus groups, the AVID/TOPS community was by far the element of the program that students found most beneficial. Students referred to their AVID/TOPS community as "very close" and "like family," with one student saying "We've been together for so long. We just love each other." One student summed it up best: "As minorities, we don't see very many people that look like us pursuing the careers we want to go in, going to the colleges we want to go to. Just being in a group of people where the people around you look like you and want to do the same things you want to do, and all want to succeed like you. It...breaks down those barriers of thinking..."

Section 2

Introduction

Introduction

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) is a large and increasingly diverse urban school district, serving over 25,000 students in 52 schools.² In 2021-22, almost 45 percent of the students in the district came from low-income families, and nearly 60 percent identified as students of color.³ Equity is a serious concern in MMSD as the district has grappled for many years with persistent socioeconomic gaps in academic achievement and high school completion rates. In 2007, as part of an effort to close these achievement gaps, MMSD began to implement the national AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination) system at East High School. In 2008, the district joined forces with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Dane County (BGCDC) to pair AVID with BGCDC's Teens of Promise (TOPS) program, and the following year the combined AVID/TOPS program was offered in all four of the district's comprehensive high schools. Starting in 2012, the AVID program expanded to 11 district middle schools, and BGCDC also began implementing the College Club program at selected middle schools that same year.

MMSD and BGCDC partnered with the Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to conduct an evaluation of the district's AVID/TOPS program. The evaluation focuses on AVID/TOPS high school and postsecondary program impacts in two areas — high school academic and engagement outcomes for students attending MMSD during the 2018-19 through 2021-22 school

years, and end-of-high school academic and postsecondary impacts across the cohorts that began ninth grade from 2010-11 through 2018-19. In addition, the report includes descriptive analyses of satisfaction surveys from both AVID/TOPS students and MMSD and BGCDC AVID/TOPS staff. Research questions guiding these analyses are as follows:

1. How do college enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes of AVID/TOPS high school participants compare to the outcomes of academically and demographically similar peers?
2. How does the end-of-high school academic achievement of students who participated in the AVID/TOPS program in high school compare to academically and demographically similar non-AVID/TOPS peers? How do impacts vary by the number of years students participated in the program?
3. How does the academic achievement of students who participated in the AVID/TOPS program in high school compare to academically and demographically similar non-AVID/TOPS peers during the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 academic years?
4. How effective are AVID/TOPS college and career readiness components? Are students, MMSD staff, and BGCDC staff satisfied with program components?

2 Madison Metropolitan School District. (n.d). *About*. Retrieved April 24, 2023, from <https://www.madison.k12.wi.us/about>

3 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (n.d). *WISEdash Public Portal*. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from <https://wisedash.dpi.wi.gov/Dashboard/dashboard/22275>

Overview of AVID

AVID is an over-40-year-old national comprehensive college and career readiness system. AVID's mission is to close the opportunity gap by preparing all students for college and career readiness in a global society.

AVID Framework

The AVID College and Career Readiness Framework provides a coherent, research-based, and efficacious model for minimizing opportunity gaps and developing college and career readiness in all students. By using a broad, system-centric perspective as a backdrop, AVID's theoretically derived and research-based Framework empowers educators to act in ways that promote more equitable and accessible learning experiences for students.

By design, the AVID Framework helps inform district and school leadership in aligning goals and initiatives, identifying opportunity gaps (system inputs), setting expectations, and understanding what it means to support every student in their community. To that end, the Framework focuses on adult actions, the learning environment, and organizational structures at the school and district levels to increase equity and access to what students need to successfully engage in a future of possibility.

Framework Elements

There are 5 components in the AVID Framework:

1. **Domains that drive schools:** there are four domains present at every school that, when aligned and attended to with intentionality, accelerate college and career readiness in all students. They include instruction, systems, leadership, and culture.
2. **Relational Capacity:** relational capacity is the connection among individuals that develops over time when interactions are built on respect, trust, and authenticity.
3. **Elements Defining College & Career Readiness:**
 - a. **Rigorous Academic Preparedness:** students develop academic skills and can successfully complete rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum and experiences.
 - b. **Opportunity Knowledge:** students research opportunities, set goals, make choices that support their long-term aspirations, and successfully navigate transitions to the next level.
 - c. **Student Agency:** students believe in themselves and act intentionally to build relationships, persist through obstacles, and activate their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills to reach their potential.
4. **Adult Actions Promoting College & Career Readiness:** 1) Insist on Rigor, 2) Break Down Barriers, 3) Align the Work
5. **Collective Educator Agency:** collective educator agency is educators on campus taking intentional actions based on shared beliefs and trusting that, together, they can increase opportunity and measurable success for all students and each other.

Table 1: MMSD AVID Elective Class District Enrollment

2022-23

GRADE LEVEL	ENROLLMENT	SECTIONS PER GRADE
9	296	12
10	242	10
11	229	10
12	216	10
Total	983	42

History

MMSD piloted the AVID program at East High School in 2007. AVID was implemented in middle schools in 2012. At that time, MMSD and BG CDC established AVID/College Club in Cherokee and Wright Middle Schools. College Club middle schoolers receive additional support including after-school tutoring, cultural field trips, and family engagement events. In addition, Wright and Cherokee receive additional funding and personnel support from BG CDC.

During 2022-23, AVID/TOPS served 983 high school students in Memorial, East, West, and La Follette high schools (Table 1). AVID/TOPS is mainly comprised of students of color (Table 2).

Table 2: AVID/TOPS Elective Class Demographics

2022-23

GRADE LEVEL	TOTAL	FEMALE	BLACK	LATINO	ASIAN	MULTI-ETHNIC	WHITE	SPECIAL EDUCATION
9	296	50%	24%	52%	6%	10%	8%	8%
10	242	59%	26%	40%	14%	10%	10%	5%
11	229	62%	31%	46%	11%	9%	3%	6%
12	216	54%	21%	44%	9%	15%	9%	8%
Total	983	56%	25%	46%	10%	11%	8%	7%

AVID Certification

The National AVID Center monitors the implementation of AVID Schoolwide through an extensive certification process, encompassing the four AVID Schoolwide Domains. Schools must show evidence of their implementation.

AVID Center introduced a new evaluation tool, the AVID Coaching & Certification Instrument (CCI). The CCI is organized into four sections that correspond to the four AVID Schoolwide Domains: Instruction, Systems, Leadership, and Culture. The use of the CCI helps schools ensure fidelity to the AVID system and plan for sustainable growth. To support the continuous improvement of the school's AVID system, the AVID Site Team is responsible for completing the CCI early in the school year, collecting authentic evidence to document progress, revisiting the CCI regularly to sustain growth, and submitting data to AVID Center in the spring to determine the overall AVID certification rating based on the level of implementation of each Domain.

The new certification ratings are the following:

1. AVID Non-Certified Site: At least one of the Domains is rated "Does Not Meet AVID Implementation Expectations."
2. AVID Certified Site: All Domains are rated "Meets AVID Implementation Expectations" or higher.
3. AVID Emerging Schoolwide Site: Three out of four Domains are rated "Emerging AVID Schoolwide" or higher. If one Domain is rated less than "Emerging AVID Schoolwide," the rating must be "Meets AVID Implementation Expectations."
4. AVID Schoolwide Site: At least two out of four Domains are rated "AVID Schoolwide" or higher. Domains rated less than "AVID Schoolwide" must be rated "Emerging AVID Schoolwide." Additionally, all Schoolwide Metrics must be rated "AVID Schoolwide" or higher.
5. AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction: All Domains are rated "Emerging AVID Schoolwide" or higher.

Table 3: AVID Certification Ratings

SCHOOL	CCI RATING	INSTRUCTION	SYSTEMS	LEADERSHIP	CULTURE
Memorial	AVID Certified	Meets	Meets	Meets	Emerging Schoolwide
East	Emerging Schoolwide	Emerging Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide
West	Emerging Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide	Meets	Emerging Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide
La Follette	Emerging Schoolwide	AVID Schoolwide	Meets	Emerging Schoolwide	Emerging Schoolwide

Program Retention

AVID/TOPS seeks to retain all students who enroll in the AVID elective class through high school graduation. Students who are struggling academically are identified and closely monitored by a school-based AVID site team. Student attrition from AVID typically occurs through three avenues: (1) they leave the district or transfer to a district school or program that does not offer AVID/TOPS, such as Malcolm Shabazz High or Early College STEM Academy; (2) they voluntarily drop the AVID elective course; or (3) they are asked to exit from the program because they fail to meet the student expectations of the AVID Elective Class (e.g., falling below a 2.0 cumulative grade point average).

We tracked the percentage of students who were enrolled in the AVID Elective Class at any point in the 2021-22 school year and whether they were enrolled as of the Third Friday of the 2022-23 school year:

- 85 percent of ninth grade students were retained
- 90 percent of tenth grade students were retained
- 96 percent of eleventh grade students were retained

BG CDC TOPS Implementation

BG CDC operates TOPS in and out of school in order to enhance the AVID program for high school students enrolled in the AVID elective class. BG CDC provides each high school with two full-time TOPS Coordinators, who work closely with students in the AVID/TOPS program and their AVID elective teachers to support scholars. Additional staff include full-time TOPS Specialists and College Enrollment Coaches who each support multiple AVID/TOPS sites.

- TOPS Coordinators support the classroom tutorial process, which includes coaching tutors and facilitating tutor orientations as well as regular tutor debrief and training sessions. TOPS Coordinators also facilitate

AVID/TOPS community building, chaperone campus field trips, and serve as members of the AVID/TOPS site teams leading the decision-making for site-based strategies around college, career, and community readiness for AVID/TOPS scholars.

- TOPS Specialists are responsible for scheduling field trips for students to visit colleges and universities and working to coordinate experiential aspects of these trips, including student panels from current college students, visits with various student services available on campus, sessions with admissions and financial aid representatives, and more. Additionally, TOPS Specialists work to schedule guest speakers to visit AVID/TOPS classrooms to discuss their college & career pathways or provide valuable resources to scholars.
- College Enrollment Coaches work with high school seniors in their classrooms supporting college selection, application, and enrollment processes, including support with the FAFSA and other financial aid and scholarship applications. College Success Coaches lead workshops during students' senior year to cover key college topics in collaboration with the TOPS College Success team.

In addition to staffing support, BG CDC provides funding for AVID tutors, field trips, and student supplies, and extends Boys & Girls Clubs membership to AVID/TOPS students for free. As Boys & Girls Clubs members, students can access opportunities such as competing for the annual Youth of the Year scholarship, community resources such as school supplies and holiday meals, and experiential learning activities focused on leadership and career development offered only to AVID/TOPS members. Much of this TOPS programming takes place during the summer to extend opportunities to scholars beyond the school year, and includes career exploration opportunities, paid pre-internships and internships, mock interviews, and more.

The TOPS College Success Program (TCSP) provides additional support for graduating seniors through college completion. Success Coaches support students during college to access campus resources, acclimate to college life, and stay on track for graduation through one-on-one coaching and group activities. Scholars continue to have access to a variety of resources through BGDC, including college student emergency funding and school supplies. This team also co-organizes the annual College Decision Day program in partnership with MMSD to celebrate the post-secondary commitments of graduating seniors, and hosts a Summer Transition Conference to address summer melt and provide assistance in the final steps of preparing for matriculation to college. BGDC has formal partnerships with Madison College and Edgewood College, two top feeder institutions for TOPS Scholars, to further support student success.

Study Methodology

We estimated the effects of high school AVID/TOPS participation using propensity score matching. This statistical method allowed AVID/TOPS students to be compared with other students who had similar academic and demographic profiles but who did not participate in the program – a more “apples to apples” comparison. Our approach matched students based on the individual probability of high school AVID/TOPS participation computed for each student within each MMSD high school. Because we used multiple cohorts in our analyses, we performed this matching process separately for each cohort to ensure that AVID/TOPS students and their matched non-AVID/TOPS counterparts were exposed to the same school environments (e.g., school policies, leadership, peers) which might otherwise bias our estimates.

To maximize the overall quality of the matching process, we allowed AVID/TOPS students to be matched with more than one similar non-AVID/TOPS comparison student. All final estimates were weighted to adjust for the number of matched partners. Matching was based on the probability of AVID/TOPS program participation as calculated from the student’s eighth grade pre-program characteristics.⁴ These baseline characteristics were derived from district administrative records and included student demographics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, low-income status [as determined by FRPL eligibility], parent education, English language learner [ELL] status, special education status); academic and behavioral records; attendance; and WKCE, Badger, and Forward Exam Reading and Math scores.⁵

We conducted this matching process on four separate samples:

- Cross-sectional – ninth through twelfth grade students enrolled in MMSD in 2018-19 through 2021-22. Students in this sample were matched separately based on high school and grade.
- Cohort, main sample – students who first enrolled in ninth grade in 2010-11 through 2018-19. Students in this sample were matched separately based on high school and cohort year.
- Cohort, persistence – students who first enrolled in ninth grade in 2010-11 through 2016-17 and enrolled in any college immediately after high school completion.
- Cohort, 4-year attendees – students who first enrolled in ninth grade in 2010-11 through 2012-13 and attended a 4-year institution. Students in this sample were matched separately based on high school and cohort year.

⁴ In order to maintain apples to apples comparisons between students within high schools, we limit the sample to students whose most recent high school is the same that their 8th grade middle school feeds into.

⁵ We use eighth grade WKCE, Badger, and Forward Exam scores instead of local assessment scores due to their availability for all cohorts used in our analyses.

Table 4: AVID/TOPS Analysis Samples, Cohorts, and Outcomes

SAMPLE	OUTCOMES	COHORT (NINTH GRADE YEAR)	OUTCOMES YEAR
Cross-sectional	Core & cumulative GPA, AP/Honors credits, AP/Honors GPA*, attendance, suspensions	2015-16 through 2021-22	2018-19 - 2021-22
		2010-11	2013-14
		2011-12	2014-15
		2012-13	2015-16
		2013-14	2016-17
		2014-15	2017-18
		2015-16	2018-19
	High school completion within 4 years, high school cumulative GPA, high school AP/Honors credits	2016-17	2019-20
		2017-18	2020-21
		2018-19	2021-22
		2010-11	2014-15
		2011-12	2015-16
		2012-13	2016-17
		2013-14	2017-18
Cohort, main	First fall postsecondary enrollment	2014-15	2018-19
		2015-16	2019-20
		2016-17	2020-21
		2017-18	2021-22
		2010-11	2016-17
		2011-12	2017-18
		2012-13	2018-19
	Postsecondary enrollment within 3 years	2013-14	2019-20
		2014-15	2020-21
		2015-16	2021-22
		2010-11	2019-20
		2011-12	2020-21
		2012-13	2021-22
		2010-11	2015-16
AA or BA completion within 6 years of high school completion	2011-12	2016-17	
	2012-13	2017-18	
	2014-15	2019-20	
	2015-16	2020-21	
	2016-17	2021-22	
	2010-11	2019-20	
	2011-12	2020-21	
Cohort, persistence	Postsecondary persistence	2012-13	2017-18
		2014-15	2019-20
		2015-16	2020-21
		2016-17	2021-22
		2010-11	2019-20
Cohort, 4-year attendees	Graduation from a 4-year institution within 150% of normal time	2011-12	2020-21
		2012-13	2021-22

* AP/Honors GPA analysis included only students who took AP/Honors courses.

We used the cross-sectional sample to estimate the impacts of AVID/TOPS participation on 2018-19 through 2021-22 cumulative and core⁶ GPA, attendance, out-of-school suspensions, AP and Honors credits, and AP and Honors GPA. With the main cohort sample we examined how participation in AVID/TOPS impacted end-of-high school outcomes (including twelfth grade cumulative GPA, AP and Honors credits, and completing high school within four years), initial postsecondary enrollment, postsecondary enrollment within three years, and AA/BA completion within six years of high school completion. The cohort, persistence sample was used to examine the impacts of AVID/TOPS participation on postsecondary education persistence.⁷ The cohort, 4-year attendees sample was used to estimate impacts of completion from a 4-year postsecondary institution within 150 percent of the normal time (six years).

Table 4 shows a list of all of the samples, cohorts, and outcomes examined in this analysis. Throughout the report we note significant program impacts using a 95 percent confidence level ($\alpha = .05$) unless specifically stated otherwise. We determined statistical significance after adjusting for multiple comparisons.⁸

⁶ Core classes include math, science, language arts, and social studies.

⁷ Persistence is defined as three semesters of continuous enrollment not including summer terms.

⁸ Benjamini, Y., & Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the False Discovery Rate: A Practical and Powerful Approach to Multiple Testing. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological)*, 57(1), 289-300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1995.tb02031.x>

In addition to estimating program impact overall, we examined impacts for several demographic subgroups (low-income, students of color, white students, low-income students of color, male students of color, and ELL students) and in the cohort samples analyzed impacts by varying levels of AVID/TOPS participation (full high school participation, partial high school participation, and any high school participation).

Like all non-experimental studies relying on observational data, the present study is subject to certain limitations. Most notably, AVID/TOPS and non-AVID/TOPS students could only be matched on the eighth grade, pre-program characteristics present in district administrative records. While these records allowed us to “control” for a comprehensive array of academic and demographic pre-program information that would otherwise bias estimates of program impact, remaining bias from other preexisting, but unobserved, factors is still possible. The analysis therefore bears this risk in absence of better strategies for estimating program effects.

Readers should also be aware that the COVID-19 pandemic impacts these results. For postsecondary and end-of-high school outcomes, the pandemic impacted some, but not all, cohorts depending on the outcome and when each cohort entered high school. For these outcomes, we analyzed impacts by cohort year. Where appropriate, those results are described in the report, although the by-cohort results themselves are not included in the report.⁹ Cross-sectional results, particularly attendance and out-of-school suspension outcomes, were directly impacted in 2019-20 and 2020-21, and lingering impacts from the pandemic may still impact results. However, it is important to keep in mind that the AVID/TOPS and comparison groups experienced the same educational environments during the pandemic. Throughout the report, we note where means and estimates may have been different had the pandemic not occurred.

Due to the large number of impact estimates in the cohort and cross-sectional analyses, after estimation of impacts we performed a multiple comparisons correction to safeguard against false positives, results that are statistically significant due to random chance.¹⁰

Finally, we present results of focus groups and a satisfaction survey that MMSD administered in winter 2023 to AVID/TOPS students and staff to gauge satisfaction with the program overall as well as with various components of the program. The surveys also asked students and staff about their perceptions of student preparedness for postsecondary education in a variety of areas.

⁹ By-cohort results available upon request.

¹⁰ Benjamini, Y., & Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the False Discovery Rate: A Practical and Powerful Approach to Multiple Testing. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological)*, 57(1), 289-300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1995.tb02031.x>

Section 3

Postsecondary and End-of-High School Impacts of AVID/ TOPS

Postsecondary and End-of-High School Impacts of AVID/TOPS

Helping students prepare for college, make a successful transition to postsecondary education, persist in college, and earn a college diploma are the primary goals of AVID/TOPS. To better understand whether the program is accomplishing these goals, we constructed several samples of cohorts who enrolled in MMSD in ninth grade (for more information on these cohort samples, see Table 4). Cohort analyses account for all years that students spent in MMSD and in AVID/TOPS. While many students remained in AVID/TOPS for all four years in high school (see above for details on program retention), some students participated for only one, two, or three years; approximately 80 percent of these students start in ninth grade but participate for fewer than four years, with the other 20 percent comprised of students who joined AVID/TOPS after ninth grade and persisted through twelfth grade. Differences in program participation are particularly important for AVID/TOPS because many program elements occur in students' senior years and during college. Students who leave early receive no coaching pre-college or during college. To test whether these varying levels of AVID/TOPS participation were related to estimated program impacts, we estimated end-of-high school and postsecondary impacts for three levels of exposure – “full participation” equal to four years of program participation, “partial participation” of between one and three years of participation, and “any participation” including any student who participated in AVID/TOPS. In this section, we present results for any participation in AVID/TOPS. Results for full and partial participation can be found in Appendix Tables 1 and 2, respectively.

Overall, our statistical matching process resulted in a combined cohort research sample with very similar AVID/TOPS and comparison group students. For the sample of students who either completed high school or dropped out of MMSD without transferring, Figure 3 presents the demographic makeup of the two groups compared to the general population of district students prior to matching. Both AVID/TOPS and comparison group students were over two-thirds low-income and three-quarters students of color. Slightly less than half of each group was male, and approximately 30 percent were English language learners. Just under a third of both groups had at least one parent with a four-year degree or higher.

Consistent with the AVID/TOPS selection process, students in the matched cohort sample came from the academic middle, with an average 3.01 cumulative GPA in eighth grade. Table 5 shows that overall, AVID/TOPS students and their comparison group counterparts in our sample had similar eighth grade GPAs, attendance, out-of-school suspensions, and state Reading and Math scores. All measures in Figure 3 and Table 5 are statistically equivalent between the two groups.¹¹ Nevertheless, in all of our impact estimates, we made statistical adjustments for any residual imbalance between the two groups.¹²

¹¹ The information presented in Figure 3 and Cohort Table 5 is consistent with the demographic and academic eighth grade characteristics for the other cohort samples analyzed.

¹² Impact estimates are derived from regression models that control for any residual imbalance in baseline characteristics between AVID/TOPS and comparison group students.

Figure 3: Demographic Characteristics of Combined Cohort Main Sample

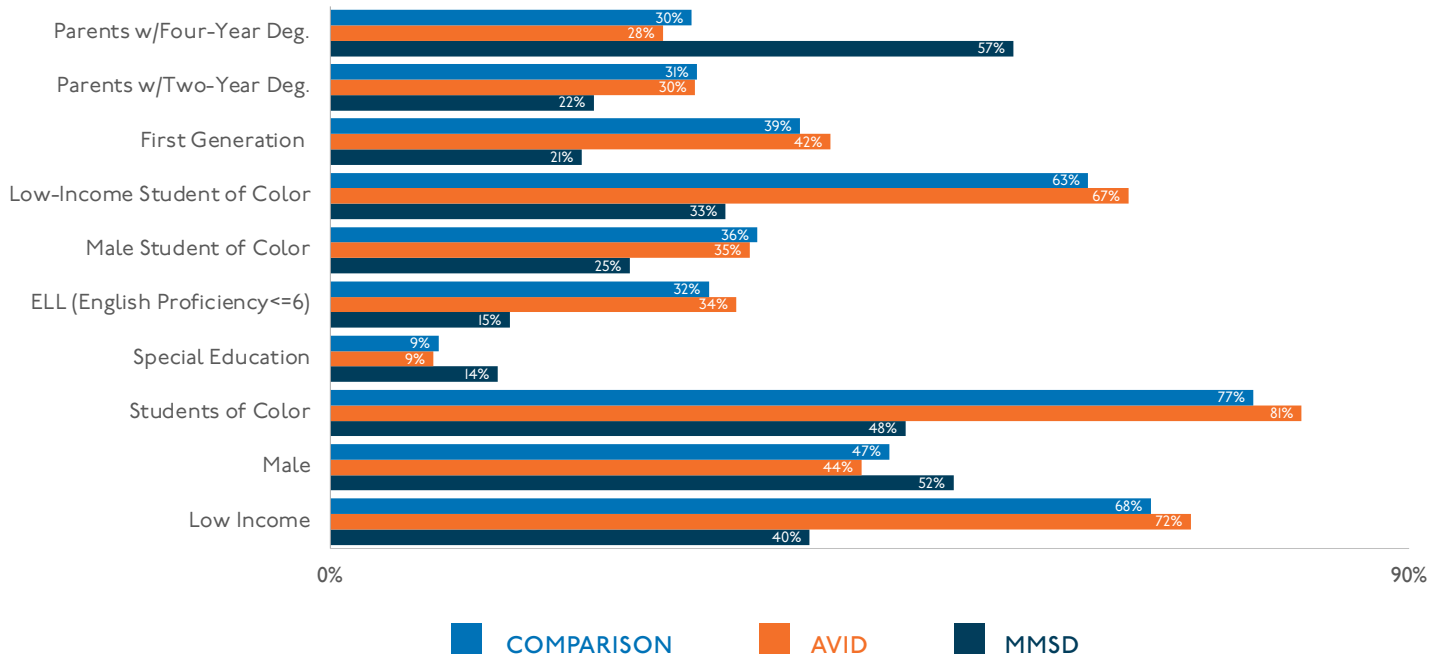


Table 5: Academic Characteristics of Combined Cohort Main Sample

	MMSD	AVID/TOPS	COMPARISON
8th Grade Cumulative GPA	3.12	3.01	3.02
8th Grade Core GPA	3.04	2.90	2.92
8th Grade Attendance Rate	0.95	0.96	0.96
8th Grade Out-of-School Suspensions	0.14	0.07	0.07
WKCE 8th Grade Reading	535.56	516.37	518.21
WKCE 8th Grade Math	555.62	535.42	538.46
Badger 8th Grade Reading	2561.15	2535.47	2533.08
Badger 8th Grade Math	2566.08	2526.10	2530.18
Forward 8th Grade Reading	630.7	608.04	609.24
Forward 8th Grade Math	644.07	623.95	624.49

Note: WKCE averages are for students in the 2010-11 through 2014-15 ninth grade cohort, Badger are for students in the 2015-16 ninth grade cohort, and Forward are for students in the 2016-17 through 2018-19 cohorts. Over the sample period, the Wisconsin state test changed twice. Due to limiting matches of AVID/TOPS students to comparison students in the same high school and cohort, the WKCE, Badger, and Forward tests were all used in matching.

Postsecondary Impacts

We examined Postsecondary impacts using a combined cohort of students enrolled in ninth grade from 2010-11 through 2017-18.¹³ Impact estimates represent the average impacts of AVID/TOPS participation over those cohorts. Our evaluation indicates that AVID/TOPS had large and statistically significant impacts on postsecondary enrollment in the first fall after high school completion, postsecondary enrollment within three years, postsecondary persistence, and achieving an Associate or Bachelor's degree within six years of high school completion. We find positive but not statistically significant impacts on completing a Bachelor's degree within six years of postsecondary enrollment. For enrollment, persistence, and high school completion, we find large, statistically significant impacts across a variety of subgroups of interest. For all outcomes, students who participated in the full four years of AVID experienced even greater program impacts than are presented below, while students who participated less experienced smaller impacts (See Appendix Tables 1 and 2 for details).

First Fall Postsecondary Enrollment

AVID/TOPS' impacts on postsecondary achievement begin immediately after high school. **By the fall following high school completion, students who had participated in the AVID/TOPS high school program enrolled in a postsecondary institution at substantially higher rates (17.05 percentage points) than their matched peers.** This impact, shown in Figure 4, was both large and statistically significant. This was true at the district level for students with any level of program exposure and across five subgroups including low-income students, students of color, low-income students of color, male students of color, and ELL students. Statistically significant impacts ranged from 17.05 percentage points at the district level to 20.68 percentage points for ELL students. Notably, for cohorts who completed high school during the pandemic, college enrollment decreased substantially. However, decreases in first fall enrollment were approximately equal between the AVID/TOPS and comparison groups (not shown).

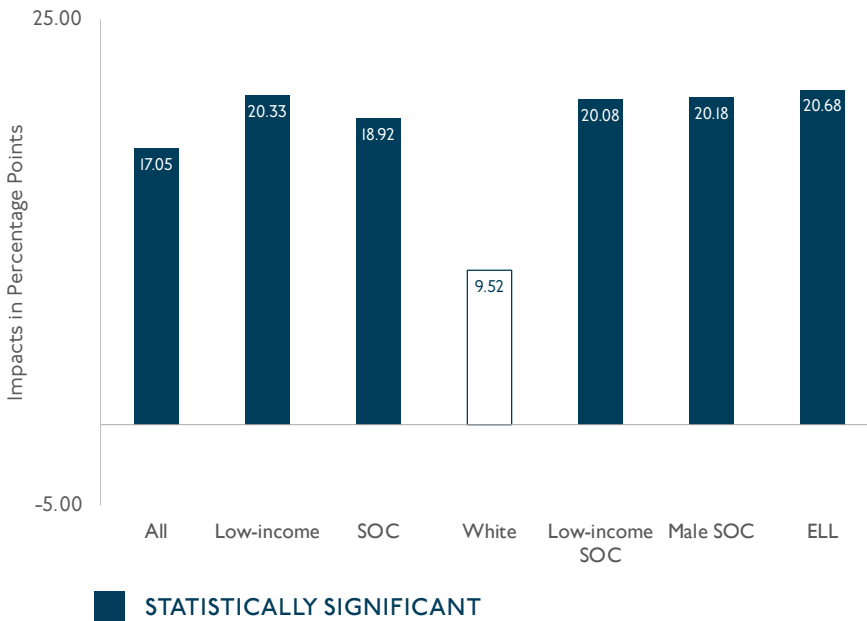
The impact estimates in Figure 4 are consistent with AVID/TOPS' focus on college preparation. College and financial aid applications can be significant hurdles to enrollment, particularly for students from lower-income, first generation backgrounds. During focus groups, AVID/TOPS students reported that the program offered significant help with college applications, meeting application deadlines, giving students time to apply for college, and the FAFSA, including covering the cost of college applications. For example, a first-generation student said that AVID/TOPS was "really helpful with applications, questions, scholarships, basically everything."

¹³ For a more detailed description of the cohorts included for each outcome, see Table 4. AVID/TOPS Analysis Samples, Cohorts, and Outcomes.

Impact figures show differences in means between AVID/TOPS students and the comparison group. Statistically significant results are represented by solid-colored bars.

Figure 4: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Initial Postsecondary Enrollment

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



Here, and for other postsecondary outcomes below, it is important to note that less than 20 percent of students in the partial exposure group received TOPS enrollment or success coaching in high school or college. These students were ineligible for coaching due to leaving AVID/TOPS early.

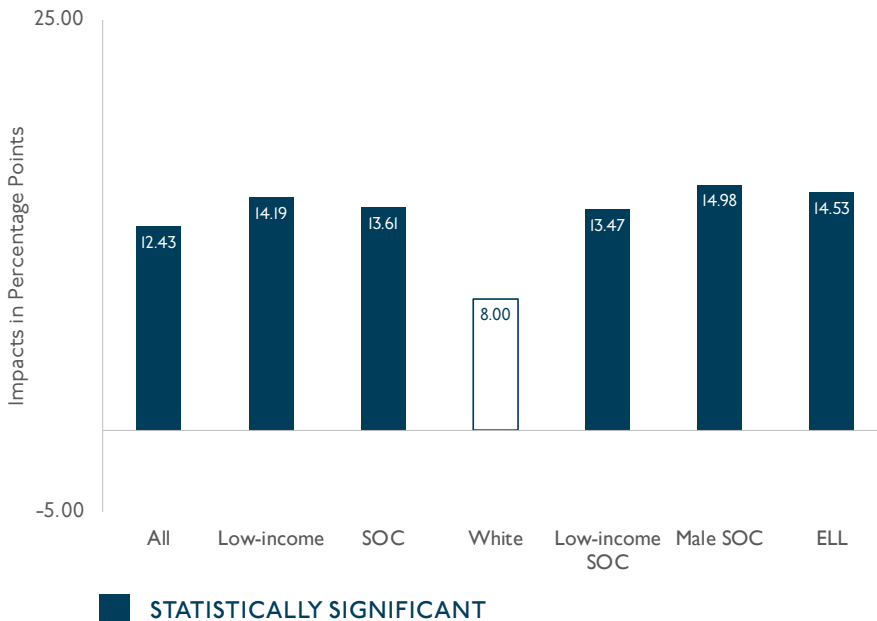
Impact figures show differences in means between AVID/TOPS students and the comparison group. Statistically significant results are represented by solid-colored bars.

Postsecondary Enrollment within Three Years

AVID/TOPS high school participation had a large, positive, and statistically significant effect on postsecondary enrollment within three years of graduating from high school (Figure 5). The district-level impact, 12.43 percentage points, was smaller than the impact of AVID/TOPS on first fall enrollment, indicating that AVID/TOPS is achieving its impact through immediate college enrollment, while comparison students somewhat narrow that gap over time. Impacts were larger for all subgroups other than White students, who enrolled in postsecondary institutions at a rate 8 percentage points higher than their peers, although this result is not statistically significant. Students who participated in AVID/TOPS for four years experienced even greater impacts (Appendix Table I).

Figure 5: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Postsecondary Enrollment within Three Years

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



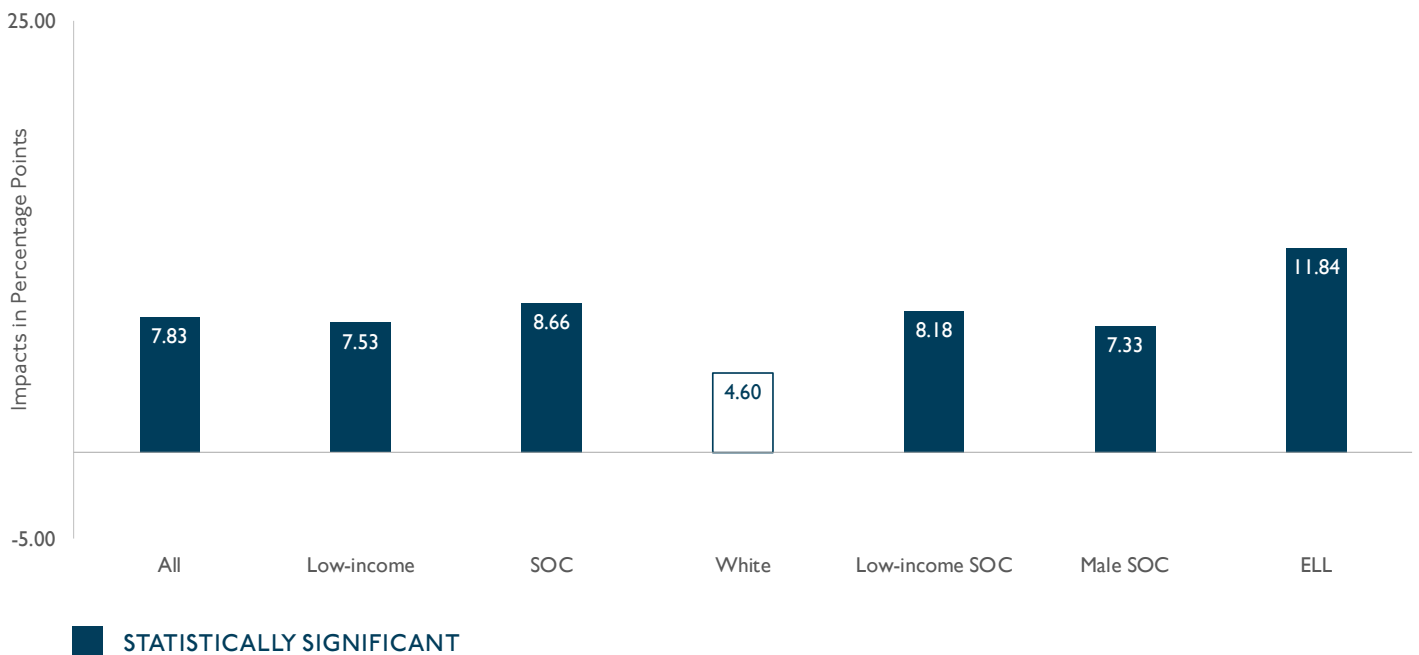
Postsecondary Persistence

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, only 75 percent of first-time undergraduates remain in college for a second year.¹⁴ AVID/TOPS services aim to support students during college so that they remain in school. **District-wide, students who were in high school AVID/TOPS and enrolled in college were 7.83 percentage points more likely than the comparison group to persist through the first 18 months of college (Figure 6).** Similar to results for postsecondary enrollment, we find statistically significant program impacts for all subgroups other than White students. There is some evidence (not shown) that during the pandemic postsecondary persistence decreased slightly across MMSD, but AVID/TOPS and comparison students experienced similar decreases.

14 Gardner, A. (2022). *Persistence and Retention: Fall 2020 Beginning Postsecondary Student Cohort*. National Student Clearinghouse Research Center. <https://nscresearchcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/PersistenceRetention2022.pdf>

Figure 6: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Postsecondary Persistence

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



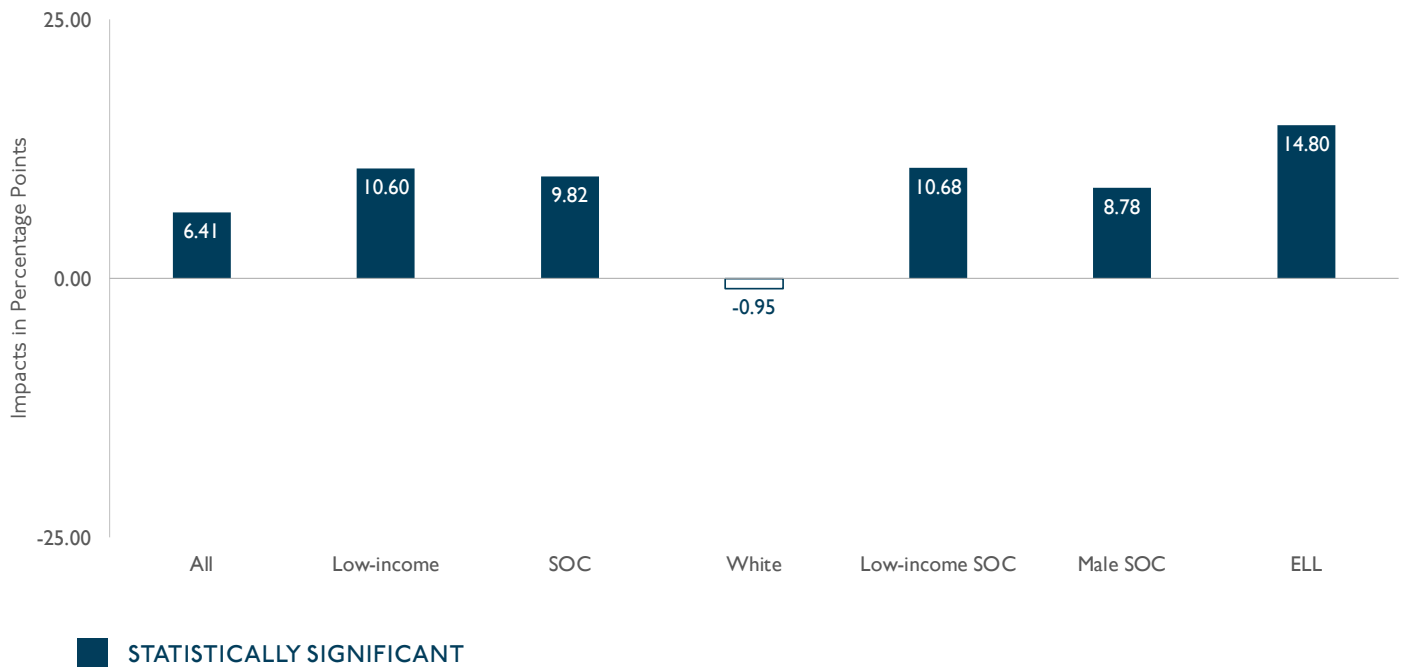
Associate or Bachelor's Completion within Six Years of High School Completion

The ultimate goal of AVID/TOPS is to narrow the achievement gap in college attainment. **Figure 7 shows that AVID/TOPS students were 6.41 percentage points more likely to earn an AA or BA degree within six years of high school completion, a statistically significant result.**¹⁵ Impacts were larger for students from low-income families (10.60 percentage points), students of color (9.82 percentage points), low-income students of color (10.68), male students of color (8.78 percentage points), and English Learners (14.80 percentage points).

¹⁵ We chose earning an AA or BA within six years as an outcome due to the complex nature of postsecondary attendance. Students frequently transfer between 2-year and 4-year institutions, stop out, and re-enroll, complicating definitions. Setting a six-year threshold for completion without constraining the type of degree a student earns simplifies the sample and analysis and is consistent with AVID/TOPS goals.

Figure 7: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Completing an AA or BA Within Six Years of High School Completion

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

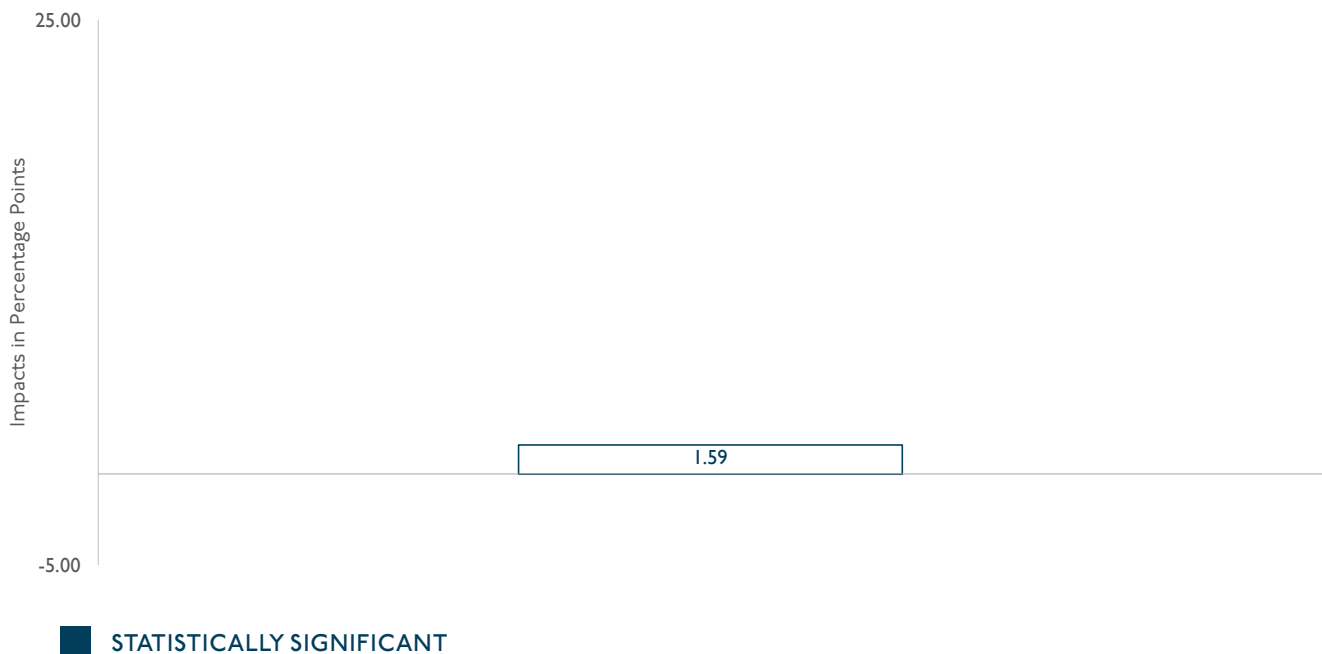


Bachelor's Completion within 150% of Normal Time

Another common measure of postsecondary completion is whether students earn a degree within 150 percent of normal time. Limiting the sample to students who enroll at a 4-year institution, we find that some evidence that AVID/TOPS helped students earn a BA within six years (Figure 8). **AVID/TOPS students were 1.59 percentage points more likely to earn their BA in 6 years, although the result is not statistically significant.** It is important to note that only three cohorts in the analysis sample have had sufficient time after high school to observe this outcome. Further constraining the sample to 4-year enrollees resulted in low sample sizes that prevented statistically precise results. We were unable to identify samples with acceptable balance for estimating subgroup impacts.

Figure 8: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Completing a BA Within Six Years of Initial Enrollment

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



End-of-High School Impacts

Although postsecondary success is AVID/TOPS' primary goal, the program also seeks to improve intermediate student outcomes including high school completion, GPA, and AP and Honors course-taking. The impact estimates in this section are based on analyses combining six ninth grade cohorts of students: 2010-11 through 2018-19. They thus represent the average impacts of high school AVID/TOPS participation across time. We find evidence that AVID/TOPS participation had significant positive average effects on high school completion rates districtwide and for most subgroups. Point estimates suggest that, on average, AVID/TOPS students achieved higher cumulative GPAs and earned more AP and Honors credits than their comparison group peers, although these results are generally not statistically significant. We detail each of these findings below.

High School Completion

There is strong evidence that AVID/TOPS high school participation increased the four-year high school completion rates districtwide and for many subgroups of students (Figure 9). Relative to the comparison group, AVID/TOPS students were 4.06 percentage points more likely to complete high school in four years. Only 4.4 percent of the AVID/TOPS sample failed to graduate within four years, about half the rate of the comparison group (8.5 percent).¹⁶

¹⁶ The intention of AVID/TOPS is to shift school culture toward a more equitable college readiness system of support. Determining the causes of increases in comparison group graduation rates is beyond the scope of this study, but it is possible that AVID/TOPS contributions to schoolwide culture have supported improvements in comparison group graduation.

Figure 9: AVID/TOPS Impacts on High School Completion in Four Years

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

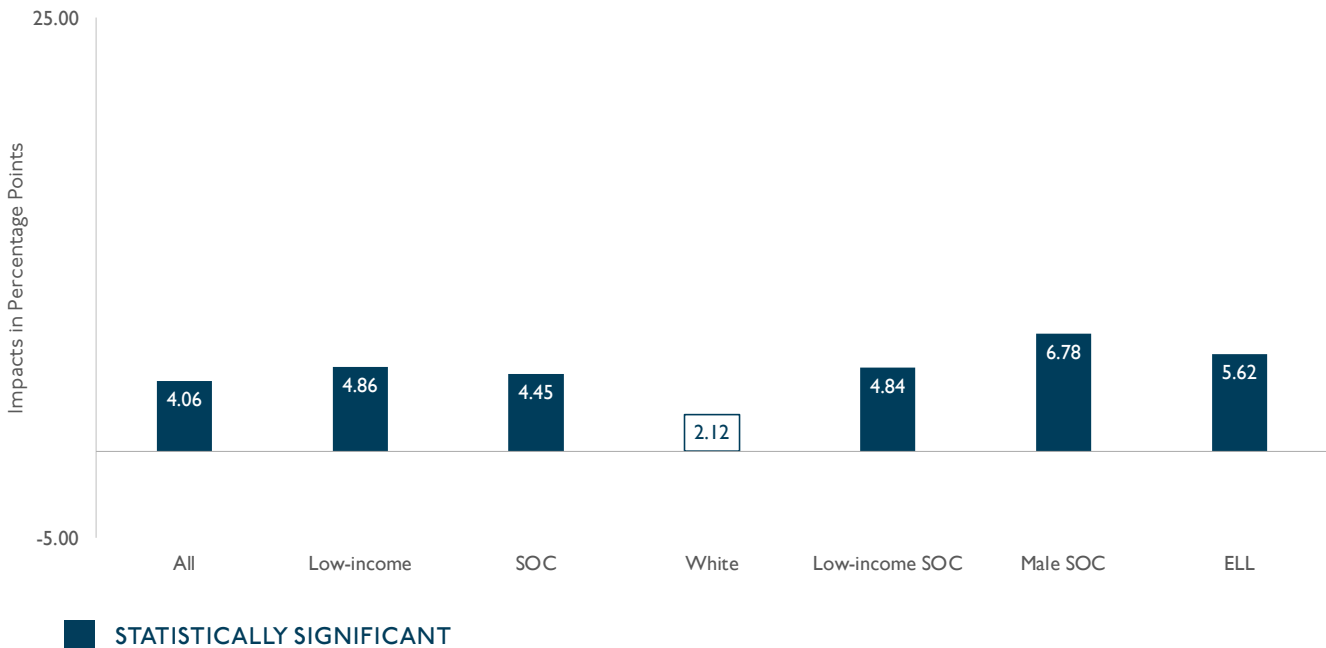
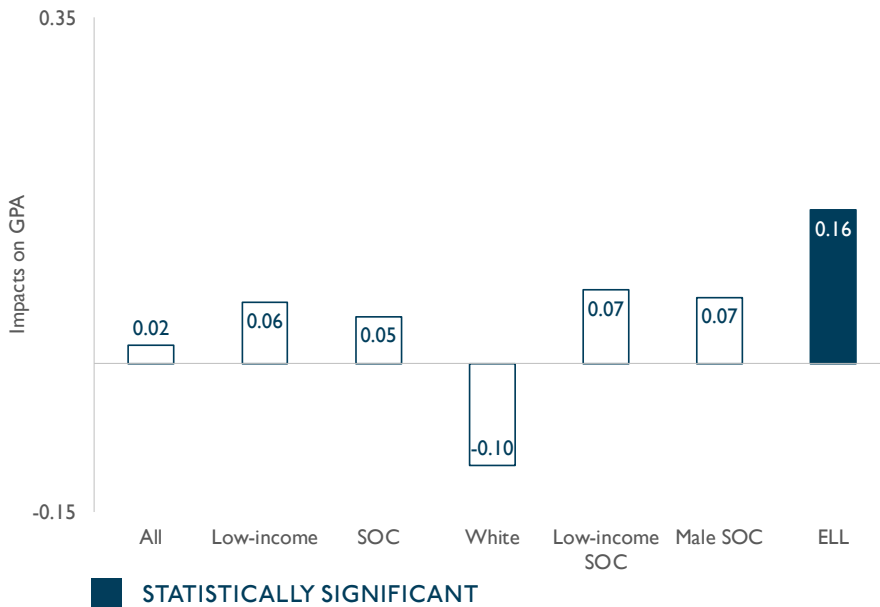


Figure 10: AVID/TOPS Impacts on High School Cumulative GPA

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



High School Cumulative GPA

Districtwide, there is no evidence that AVID/TOPS students achieved higher cumulative GPAs than the comparison group (Figure 10). AVID/TOPS students' average GPA was only slightly higher (0.02 grade points) than the comparison group's, and not statistically significant. The one exception was AVID/TOPS' impact on ELL students, whose average GPAs were 0.16 grade points higher than their comparison peers.

High School AP and Honors Course Credits

AVID/TOPS students earned approximately 0.5 more AP & Honors credits over their high school careers. This difference is small and statistically insignificant. As shown in Figure II, relative to the comparison group, AVID/TOPS students were generally more likely to earn advanced credits, consistent with the program's focus on encouraging students to take on more challenging course loads. Although most of these results are not statistically significant, they are also consistent with the majority of focus group students who reported that AVID/TOPS encouraged them and made them more willing to take higher-level courses.

Figure II: AVID/TOPS Impacts on High School AP & Honors Credits

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



Section 4

2021-22 Cross- Sectional AVID/TOPS Impacts

2021-22 Cross-Sectional AVID/TOPS Impacts

To provide data for continuous improvement, MMSD and BGDC requested analyses of annual impacts on academic achievement, attendance, out-of-school suspensions, and ACT outcomes. We estimated impacts separately for the 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22 academic years. For simplicity, in this section we present results for 2021-22. Impact estimates for all other years can be found in Appendix Tables 3, 4, and 5.

The statistical matching process for the cross-sectional samples resulted in a matched comparison group of non-AVID/TOPS students whose eighth grade demographic and academic characteristics closely resembled those

of their AVID/TOPS counterparts. Figure 12 presents the demographic makeup of the two groups, as well as the demographic profile of the full district. Among both AVID/TOPS students and their matched comparison group peers, students of color made up approximately 90 percent of the sample. Low-income students represented over three-quarters of the matched sample. Slightly less than half of AVID/TOPS and comparison group students were male, while about one third were English language learners. Students in the matched sample most commonly had parents who had attended college. However, just a quarter had parents who had earned a four-year college degree or higher.

Figure 12: Demographic Characteristics of the 2021-22 Cross-Sectional Sample

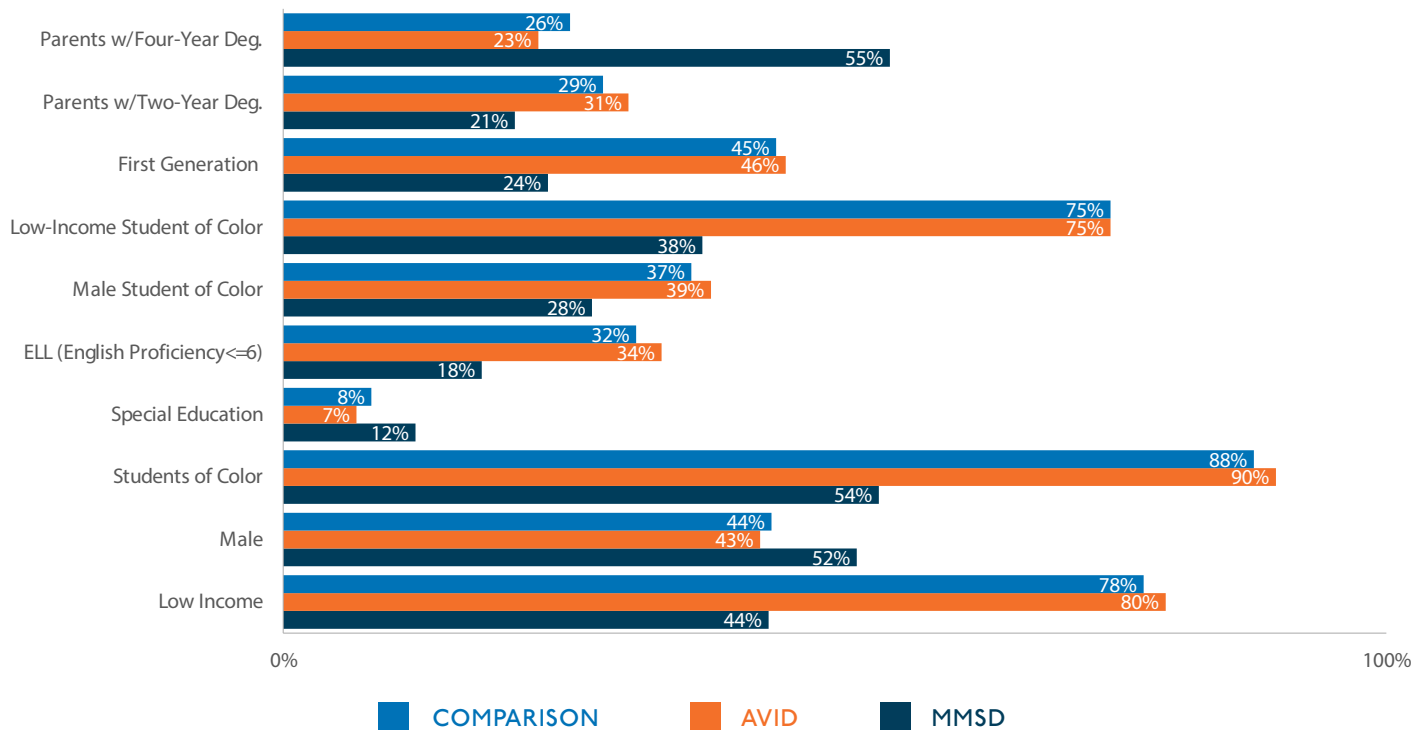


Table 6 shows that AVID/TOPS students and their comparison group counterparts had nearly identical academic histories at the end of middle school. This was true in terms of their eighth grade GPA, as well as their eighth grade Forward Exam Reading and Math scores. Reflecting how AVID/TOPS selects its participants, students in the matched cross-sectional sample came from the academic middle, with an average GPA of 3.16 as eighth graders. All baseline measures in Figure I2 and Table 6 are statistically equivalent between AVID/TOPS students and their comparison group peers.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in all of our impact estimates we made statistical adjustments for any residual imbalance between the two groups.¹⁸

¹⁷ Throughout the report, statements of statistical significance are based on a 95% confidence level, with $\alpha = .05$

¹⁸ Impact estimates are derived from regression models that control for any residual imbalance in baseline characteristics between AVID/TOPS and comparison group students.

Table 6: Academic Characteristics of the 2021-22 Cross-Sectional Sample

	MMSD	AVID/TOPS	COMPARISON
8th Grade Cumulative GPA	3.20	3.16	3.14
8th Grade Core GPA	3.21	3.14	3.12
8th Grade Attendance Rate	0.93	0.94	0.94
8th Grade OSS	0.09	0.04	0.05
Forward 8th Gr. Reading	627.11	603.27	602.60
Forward 8th Gr. Math	641.98	619.97	621.23
Forward 7th Gr. Reading	622.73	603.22	699.65
Forward 7th Gr. Math	627.72	600.66	605.26
Forward 6th Gr. Reading	607.51	587.86	587.97
Forward 6th Gr. Math	612.22	590.52	590.97

Note: Due to the lack of state testing in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we matched using seventh grade Forward for students in 2020-21 ninth grade cohort, and sixth grade Forward for students in the 2021-22 ninth grade cohort. Matching for all other cohorts used eighth grade Forward.

Figure 13: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Cumulative GPA, 2021-22

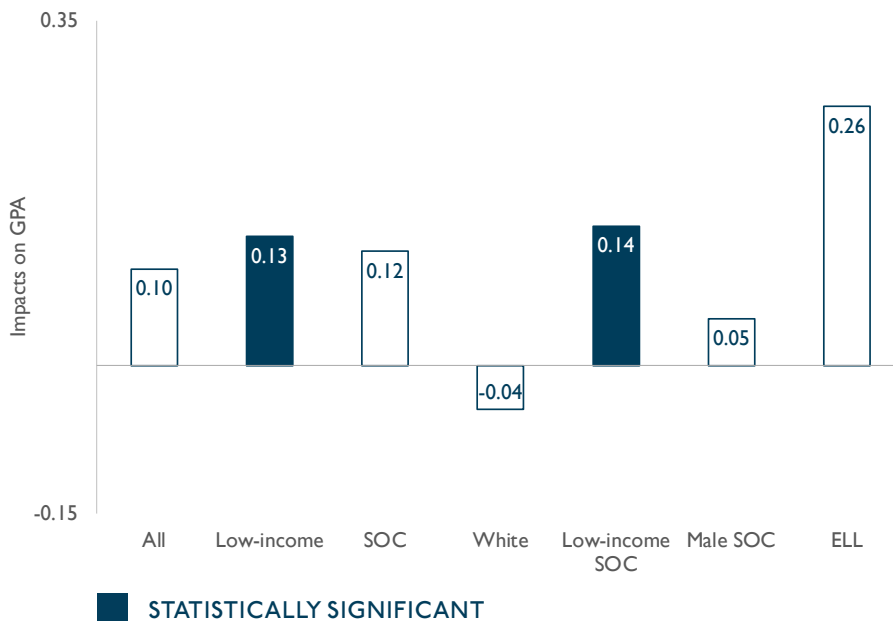
Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



As described above, impact estimates in this section are based on a cross-sectional analysis of students in ninth through twelfth grades from 2018-19 through 2021-22. They thus represent the average impacts of AVID/TOPS participation over those grades. Our evaluation of high school AVID/TOPS finds some evidence that AVID/TOPS had positive impacts on GPA, AP & Honors credits earned, and absences, although none of the results are statistically significant. These results depart from past evaluations of cross-sectional outcomes that found impacts of similar magnitude that were also statistically significant. The reason for this difference is that the evaluation employs a multiple comparisons correction to account for the likelihood that, with many impact estimates, we will find statistically significant results by random chance.¹⁹ We detail each of these findings below.

Figure 14: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Core GPA, 2021-22

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



HIGH SCHOOL GPA

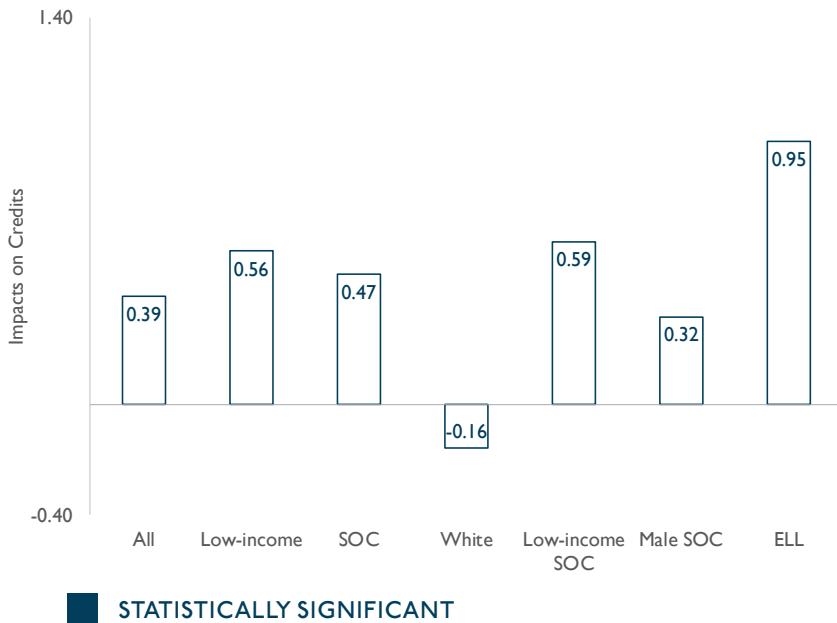
There is evidence of positive, though modest, average program impacts on high school academic performance.

AVID/TOPS students earned higher cumulative and core GPAs than their non-AVID/TOPS peers. This was true both at the district level and across focal subgroups (Figures 13 and 14). No differences in cumulative GPA are statistically significant. Differences in core GPA are statistically significant for low-income students and low-income students of color.

¹⁹ See Benjamini, Y., & Hochberg, Y. (1995). Controlling the False Discovery Rate: A Practical and Powerful Approach to Multiple Testing. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series B (Methodological)*, 57(1), 289-300. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2517-6161.1995.tb02031.x>

Figure 15: AVID/TOPS Impacts on AP & Honors Course Credits, 2021-22

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



AP & HONORS CREDITS

Similar to findings for cumulative and core GPA, we find positive point estimates of average AVID/TOPS effects on AP and Honors course enrollment, although none are statistically significant. At the district level and across most subgroups, AVID/TOPS students took more credits in AP and Honors courses in relation to their comparison group peers (Figure 15). Overall and across all subgroups, AVID/TOPS students had similar AP and Honors course GPAs relative to their matched peers (Figure 16). It is important to note that comparing AP and Honors course GPAs across the AVID/TOPS and comparison groups might not be an apples-to-apples comparison, because AVID/TOPS students are more likely to take AP and Honors courses. These higher take-up rates for the AVID/TOPS group might result in lower GPAs, because students are taking more challenging coursework. That AVID/TOPS students are achieving similar AP and Honors GPAs (and cumulative GPAs), while taking more difficult coursework, should be seen as a net positive. Again, the estimates in Figures 15 and 16 reflect students' perspectives, offered during focus groups, that AVID/TOPS pushed them to take advanced courses and provided the support necessary to do so.

Figure 16: AVID/TOPS Impacts on AP & Honors Course GPA, 2021-22

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

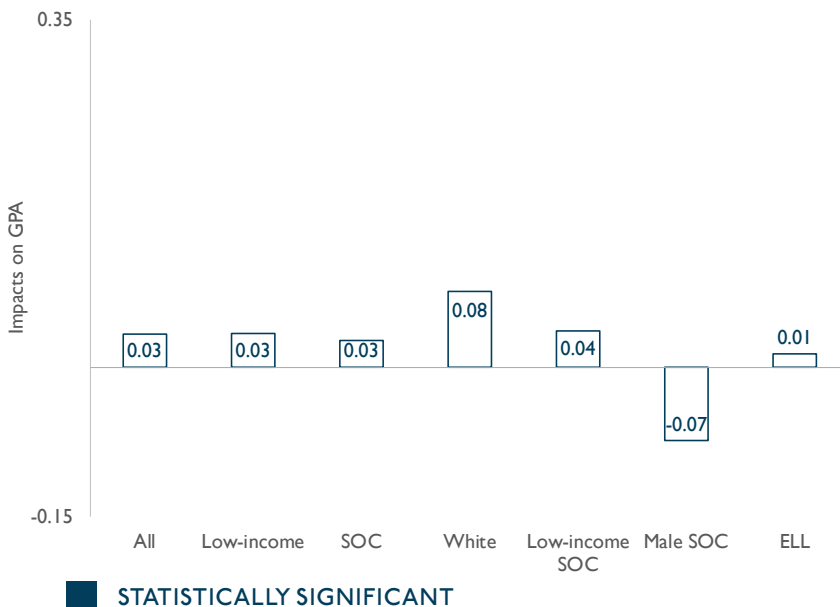
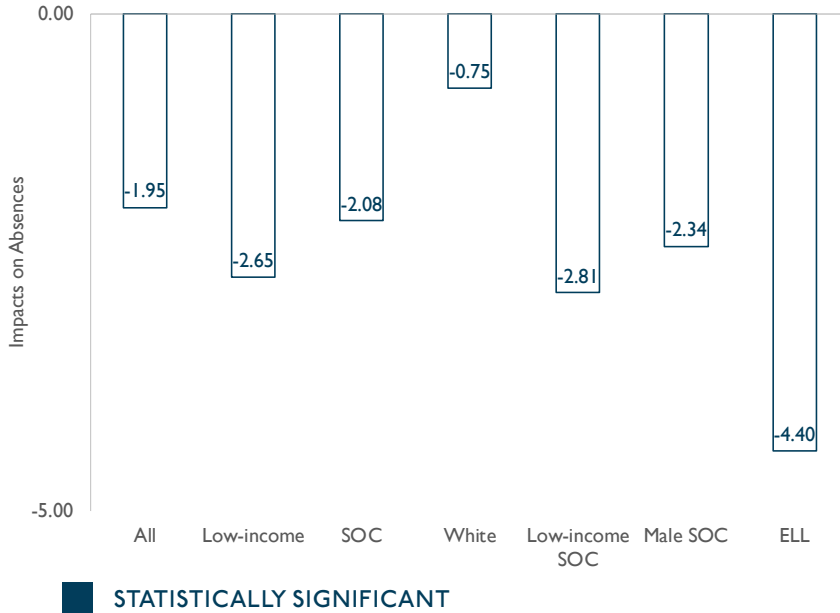


Figure 17: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Absences, 2021-22

Negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS, Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

There is some evidence that AVID/TOPS participation reduced the number of absence days and unexcused absence days in high school. At the district level and across all subgroups, absence days and unexcused absence days for AVID/TOPS students were lower on average than their comparison group counterparts. These differences, however, are not statistically significant (Figures 17 and 18).

Figure 18: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Unexcused Absences, 2021-22

Negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS, Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

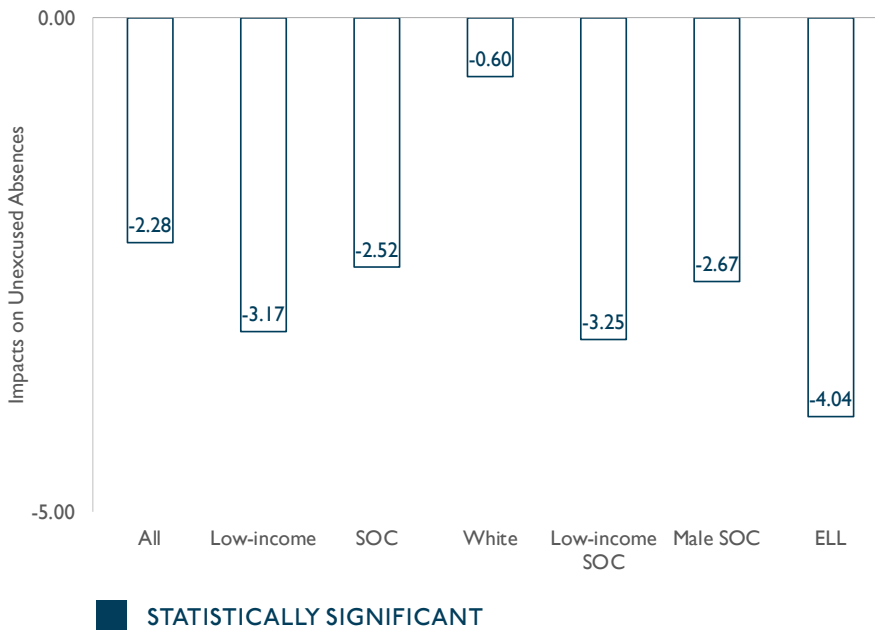
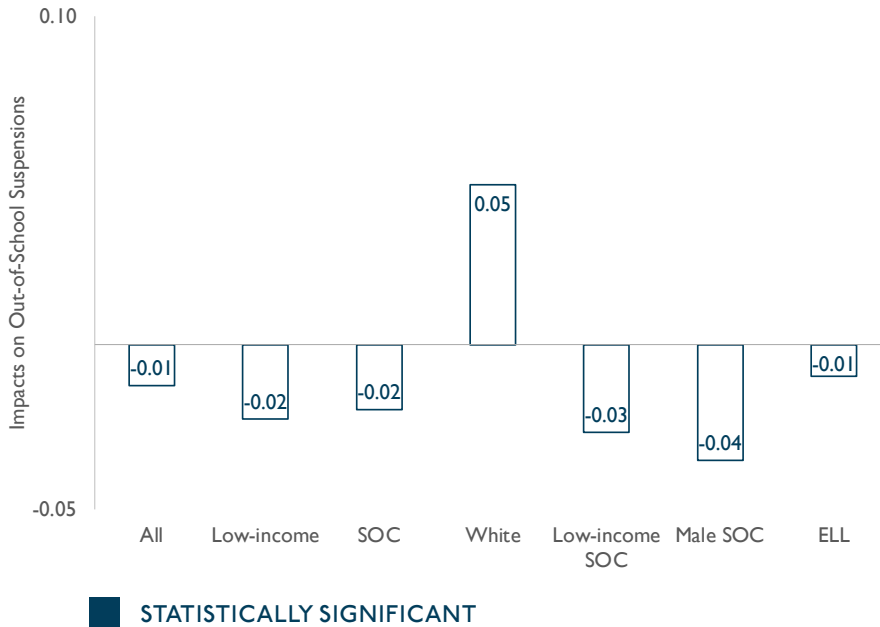


Figure 19: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Out-of-School Suspensions, 2021-22

Negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS, Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



HIGH SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS

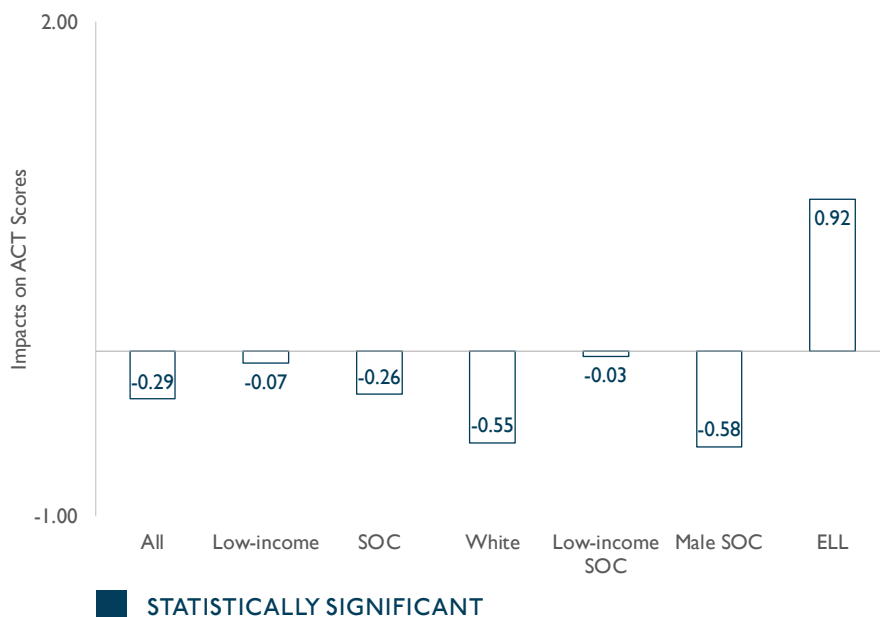
We did not find evidence of significantly different out-of-school-suspension rates in high school for AVID/TOPS students (Figure 19). Although at the district level and across most focal subgroups AVID/TOPS students had fewer out-of-school suspensions than their comparison group peers, the differences are small.

ACT

The ACT remains an important component of the college application process, and AVID/TOPS helps prepare students for the assessment. During focus groups, students voiced their appreciation for AVID/TOPS' ACT preparation and for covering retake costs. We evaluate average ACT composite scores for eleventh graders. In general, AVID/TOPS students scored slightly lower on the ACT than their comparison group peers, although none of the differences are statistically significant.

Figure 20: AVID/TOPS Impacts on ACT Composite, 2021-22

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students



Section 5

Focus Group Results

Focus Group Results

Evaluators from the Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC) conducted focus groups with students from the four AVID/TOPS high schools to learn about their perspectives on the AVID/TOPS program. Students were asked about the program components they found the most and the least beneficial, how participation in the program helped inform their selection of high school courses, how it supported their college planning, and suggestions they had for improving the program. In total, approximately 52 students participated in the focus groups. Three of the focus groups included a mix of students representing different grade levels; one focus group included only seniors and one focus group included only juniors.

Overall Impressions

Overall, students greatly appreciated the opportunity to participate in AVID/TOPS. As a result of their participation, students discussed how they built strong communities, gained skills both in and out of the classroom, took higher-level courses, and prepared for life after high school. Most students had highly positive impressions of the program. For example, one student noted that “AVID is very useful, so it’s really hard to find something that’s not working out,” and another “definitely...would recommend people to apply for” AVID/TOPS. A different student expressed that **“it’s probably one of the best classes I’ve ever had. I like the people in it, the teacher. I just feel like I belong in AVID.”** AVID/TOPS students are also aware that they receive opportunities other students may not (“AVID gives you so many opportunities that other classes can’t”) and that the program informs them of such opportunities: “It really pushes you, gives you an equal opportunity, prepare themselves to do something they really want to do. I wouldn’t be aware of the opportunities that were out there if it wasn’t for AVID.”

The following sections discuss student perceptions of the program’s components and preparation for higher-level courses and postsecondary opportunities, concluding with student recommendations for program improvement.

AVID/TOPS Components

Focus group participants were asked to share their thoughts on the AVID/TOPS components that were most and least beneficial. The following section summarizes feedback on the components the students addressed, most of which they identified as beneficial.

Community

By far, the AVID/TOPS community was the element of the program the students found the most beneficial. Across the focus groups, students referred to their AVID/TOPS community as “very close” and “like family.” Indeed, several students referred to the program as a family, with one saying, “AVID is a big family that’s always got your back,” and another stating, “we’ve been together for so long. We just love each other.” The students reported several benefits of being “stuck with the same kids for years.” First, they valued meeting new friends and expanding their friend group; as one student shared, “if I didn’t have this class, I don’t think I would know these people; because of this class, my friend group is more spread out.” Relatedly, these strong AVID/TOPS communities provide a peer support network. AVID/TOPS students appreciated the “new peers” in the class, that the program “helps [them] find people who want the same things,” and “keeps [them] surround[ed] by people with the same goals.” One student noted that, “If I have a problem, I have many people in my class to help,” and another student articulated, “I’m more comfortable around them, you can ask them for help, they are in the same boat, they take the same classes.” The students further explained that in this community they “help each other” and through their interactions “build self-awareness.” AVID/TOPS’ demographic makeup also fosters community, as one student explained:

As minorities, we don’t see very many people that look like us pursuing the careers we want to go in, going to the colleges we want to go to. Just being in group of people where the people around you look like you, and want to do the same things you want to do, and all want to succeed like you. It breaks down those statistics and breaks down those barriers of thinking...

Students also mentioned program teachers when discussing their AVID/TOPS community. A student in one school discussed the range of supports AVID/TOPS teachers provide: “They are always willing to go to bat for you. If you’re struggling with another teacher, they’ll email them or talk to them. Even if you’re going through things at home, they’ll ask, do you want me to email your parents, do you want me to help?” Another talked about how the teacher “... encourages us to ask questions when we go on field trips, and when there are guest speakers.” At a different school, a student said that teachers had helped with “emails and job applications,” and that teachers were willing to help struggling students in their specific subjects or advocate for them in their other classes. One student provided an example: “With my pre-calc first semester, it was very hard. AVID helped me get a tutor to talk to the teacher, try to figure out a solution. AVID has helped me get a better grade in that particular class since I was failing. They have helped me break down that barrier with my teacher.”

In addition to these specific supports, several students discussed the importance of forming relationships with their AVID/TOPS teachers. In one instance, the students appreciated “having the same teacher all four years.” They shared that the teacher “basically goes through high school with us, she’s our school mom.” In another school, there had been turnover with the AVID/TOPS teacher every year. The students in that school’s focus group stated that it was “a bit funky” having multiple AVID teachers and wished there had been one teacher throughout their high school career. This sort of consistency is crucial for students; as one said, student experience in the program “depends on that relationship you have with your teacher and how well they know you ... Once they know you, they’re more than willing to help you find other things, no matter what you need help with, no matter how big, how small.” These relationships can help students navigate mental health challenges, too – as one student related, “When I tell [my teacher], I can’t go to class right now, she’s like, come with me, we’ll sit down and talk. It’s really helpful, especially with mental health aspect, not being able to advocate for yourself in that situation. It’s nice to have an adult that can understand what you’re going through.” This theme echoes findings from other evaluations, such as WEC’s work on DPI’s Academic and Career Planning (ACP) initiative, that safe and supportive relationships with adults have positive impacts on student mental health.²⁰

20 Worth, R., Sim, G., Arrigoni, J., & Marlin, D. (2022). *Academic and Career Planning Evaluation 2021-22*. Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Retrieved May 26, 2023, from https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/2022_10_WEC_ACP_2022_Annual_Report.pdf

Binder and Planner Checks

Across the board, students found binder and planner checks to be another beneficial element of AVID/TOPS. Students reported that the binder and planner checks helped them with their “organizational skills,” “time management,” and being “prepared.” Multiple students discussed how AVID/TOPS improved their organization. One student explained, “for me personally, my organizational skills ... wasn’t that good. Well, when I got into AVID, I got better because of those binder checks.” Another student said, “before AVID, I really didn’t keep track of my schedule. But now that I have a planner, it’s easier for me to know what I have to do on this day and this day.” With respect to planners specifically, one student shared, “I like the planner checks because you are getting prepared for the next week... what needs to be done, what doesn’t need to be done, and goal setting.” Another student had a similar reaction, saying “AVID really helped me to use a planner, and keep track of all my deadlines.” Finally, one student connected planners to the bigger picture of AVID/TOPS: “They really want you to know what your plan is in school and out of school, and what you plan to do in the future.”

Field Trips

Students found field trips to be one of the most beneficial components of the program. They appreciated the opportunity to see colleges that they may want to attend and “physically going onto the campuses,” and even if they were not interested in attending, they found value because it “shows [them] perspective of how college is going to be like.” One student summed up that attitude by saying, “seeing the campuses, different sizes, looking at private schools versus public schools, what we like, what we don’t like, pros and cons, I feel like that is a great factor with choosing what colleges [I] want to go to, don’t want to go to.” Similarly, another talked about field trips as, “... build[ing] more of where you want to go, what you want to do. We research things other classes wouldn’t do.” And a different student discussed seeing different class sizes as part of the college visits: “With the college tours, we’re able to get a feel for college, how these classes might be this big, or be this small, and be a one-to-one kind of thing.”

Guest speakers

Students expressed that guest speakers were one of the “largest” benefits of AVID/TOPS. As one student shared, guest speakers are valuable because “they share their experiences with [the students] and tell [them] about their college experience and career path.” Another student expressed a similar sentiment: “They talk about what they do with their jobs and how they got there. And like, you look at somebody else’s journey from their eyes and their struggles and their accomplishments, and it’s really helpful.” Another student said that from guest speakers, “you get another perspective on how people [use their college degree.]”

Focus Notes

Students had mixed feelings about focus notes. Some students shared that they were useful, with one explaining that “focus notes are really helpful because it helps you learn how to take notes during all your classes.” Another student similarly indicated that “the note learning process is the most helpful. It can really help you better your grades based on how you do your notes, and teach you an efficient way...of note-taking.” Furthermore, students at multiple schools connected the note-taking process to college. As one said, they “help get you in the routine of taking notes, so when you go off to college, you can have that routine going.” However, a few students did not find focus notes to be beneficial. For instance, one student stated, “I just don’t take notes that way.”

Tutorials

As with focus notes, some students found tutorials more beneficial than did others. A few students shared that tutorials were helpful “because if [they] don’t understand something in class, and don’t feel comfortable asking [a question in class], [they] can bring that question into the tutorial group.” Another discussed how tutorials could lead to help in class, saying “some people don’t want to do it because it’s too much work with other homework, but when you do TRFs [Tutorial Request Forms], you pinpoint which class you’re confused in, and which class you need help [in]. When you do TRFs, you can get help when a teacher sees you struggling.”

Conversely, other students expressed frustration with the frequency and relevance of the tutorials. Some students reported that they did not like that tutorials are “very structured,” and that because they take place “every week,” they are “kind of a waste of time.” Instead, it was suggested that tutorials could take place “every other week,” or that the day or days of the week that tutorials take place could be shifted. For example, when tutorials took place on Tuesdays (the “start of the week”), students did not yet have any questions. At one school, students discussed the “repetitive” nature of the tutorials and that the small size of AVID/TOPS classes at the upper grade levels diminishes the usefulness of the tutorials: “Junior/senior year, tutorials just get like, what do I do a TRF on? I’m either not confused on anything or I don’t have anyone to really work on it with.”

Tutors and Study Groups

Students generally expressed that tutors were helpful, though at one school, students noted that the transitory nature of the tutors was a challenge. One student expressed that “I feel like we never get to know our tutors,” while another related that tutors “[get] us all excited, and a month or maybe two later they’re gone.” As a result, the usefulness or knowledge of tutors could change from year to year; some students noted that tutors might not be knowledgeable in subject areas with which they need help.

There was little discussion about study groups, but students did share that they were helpful. For example, some students expressed that “study groups are way better” than tutorials, and that “everyone gets something out of study groups rather than focused on one person.”

Internships and Volunteering

A few students mentioned the opportunity to participate in internships and volunteering. One student noted that the internship component is “very helpful because we’re always the first served ... AVID ... gets these opportunities before everyone else.” A different student stated that because AVID/TOPS had presented internship opportunities, they had “done one.” Another student explained that because AVID/TOPS was a part of the Boys and Girls Clubs, that connection led to “opportunities to volunteer.” At one school, while students appreciated the internship opportunities, some were disappointed that they were only in the medical field; as one student described, “every internship we’ve gotten is for the medical field. For people who want to go into that, obviously that’s good, but I want to be a lawyer. I don’t want to be a doctor.”

High School Course Selection

The majority of students reported that AVID/TOPS both encouraged them to take higher-level courses and helped them select courses to take. Students indicated that information about courses was presented to them, including “which classes will give [them] more credits and which ones will benefit [them] more with what [they] want to do in college.” One student had a similar response regarding credits, saying “they get you thinking about the college, what type of colleges use these credits, what do they require, what they don’t accept.” Students also said that their AVID/TOPS instructors “remind” them about course registration so that it is “on top of your list.” At one school, students shared that the AVID/TOPS counselor was a “really good resource,” that the counselor “knows everything,” and that the “one-on-one meetings” the students had with the counselors were helpful. However, in another school, students reported that sharing information was “as far as they go.”

Students also discussed AVID/TOPS’ influence on their willingness to take higher-level courses. One student indicated that the program “made me want to take higher courses, higher classes, do things that relate to the career path I want to take.” At a different school, a student appreciated that the teachers were “realistic” about the workload involved in certain courses, stating that “some teachers want to push you to do higher stuff. But I talk to the coordinator a lot. She’s really realistic with me with the

classes – what type of people are going to be in the classes, how the classwork is, how the teachers are, since she has experience working here. I really like that for choosing classes.” Another student described the way the AVID/TOPS teacher and counselor challenged them to take difficult courses:

We’ll be sitting there, when we’re deciding on our classes for the next year, and we’ll be like, no, I don’t want to take the AP class. They’ll be like, you’re taking the AP class. You can do it. You don’t want to, and then you actually get there, you do it, and you’re doing really well in it. If you aren’t, they’ll let you drop it. But they just push us to make sure at least we’re trying it. I’m pretty sure almost every kid in our class is in an AP class. We all take them. If we’re all struggling on one thing, we all can come together and figure it out. They push us, and they know us well. So even when we’re not trying to push ourselves, they’re like, you’re going to do it. And then we do good in it, so it ends up being fine.

In terms of preparation for these higher-level courses, most students echoed the idea expressed by one student that “AVID does do a good job of preparing for those courses.” Students not only felt encouraged to take AP classes, but they also felt confident in taking AP classes because they had “different skills that [they] gained” through AVID/TOPS that would help them be successful, and that if they ever “got confused” they could “present to the tutors” or “bring it back to the tutors.” One student suggested that the program could be improved by explaining to students why taking AP courses would be helpful, not just that they should take them. Students at one school said that their AVID/TOPS counselor personally encouraged students to try AP classes, while at a different school, students reported that information about AP classes was shared generally to all students. And one student brought up the financial assistance AVID/TOPS provides for AP courses: “A lot of people take AP classes but they might not take the test because it is expensive. AVID gives you that opportunity to take that without having to pay, which is an advantage for a lot of people.”

A few students reported that being in AVID/TOPS did not help them with course selection. One student pushed back on the idea that the program prepared students for higher-level courses specifically, stating that it helped more generally: “The skills they teach us in AVID don’t specifically prepare us for any classes. The working together, you’re going to need to do that in any class, no matter if it’s an AP or Honors class.” A student at a different school echoed that sentiment as well, saying “AVID really helps with just school in general.”

College preparation

Students’ impressions of college preparation were summed up well by one student who said, “AVID did really help me prepare...for college.” While AVID/TOPS does have a specific focus on preparing students for higher education, students at one school also discussed how program staff help prepare students for life after high school even if they do not plan to attend college: “If you feel like college isn’t your path, you just have to let them know and they’ll figure out a way to help you.”

Applications

Nearly all seniors we spoke with appreciated the “help with deadlines” for applying to college, with one saying specifically that “without it, I don’t think I would do anything on time.” Seniors also mentioned the push to “do early admissions.” Students expressed that AVID/TOPS gave them “time to apply for college” that they would not have had otherwise. Some students also stated that guidance on the common app was “really helpful.” In addition, they highlighted that the financial assistance with the cost of applying to schools was “super helpful;” as one senior noted, “AVID basically waives your application fees for college. That helped me out a lot. I applied to nine colleges, and I wasn’t going to pay all that money just to apply, and put my foot in the water.” A first-generation college student said that AVID/TOPS was “really helpful with applications, questions, scholarships, basically everything.”

FAFSA and Scholarships

Helping to “break down” the FAFSA and the FAFSA workshop that was offered was beneficial to students and their families. In one school, a student recounted, “recently in our class, they went over breaking down financial aid from colleges, and the wording for that.” Another student mentioned that “for most AVID classes, they tend to introduce us to some type of payment plan for college. If you do this, they can pay for this much of your college.” Exposure to scholarship opportunities was also cited as a benefit. AVID/TOPS students stated that they “get offered more opportunities for scholarships” and that they hear about scholarships sooner than other students not in the program. Further, they said that being in the program and having AVID/TOPS “on your transcript boosts the chance to get a scholarship.”

ACT Preparation

Juniors appreciated that AVID/TOPS took time to prepare them for the ACT. A student at one school indicated that “kids that are not in AVID, they don’t get the opportunity to practice for [the ACT] continuously over the course of their whole junior year.” Students appreciated that the ACT preparation got them ready for what the timing of the test would feel like, with one saying, “it helped me with time management on the ACT, helped me be less stressed.” Students at multiple schools also referenced AVID’s assistance with “paying to retake the ACT.”

Student Recommendations

The following are recommendations for improving the AVID/TOPS program based on the perceptions of the students who participated in the focus groups.

- In-class recommendations
 - Collaboration with other AVID/TOPS classes (“if we combined our classes, they would build an even stronger community...and add more diversity”)
 - Adding more guest speakers
 - Shifting tutorial days
 - Maintaining a consistent instructor across the four years of high school
 - Maintaining consistent tutors across the four years of high school
- Experience recommendations
 - More field trips, specifically to see colleges outside of Wisconsin, and opportunities to visit colleges earlier in high school
 - More hands-on career exploring and shadowing so that students can learn about careers they are interested in and how to prepare for those careers in college (“kids don’t know what they want to be after college”)
 - A more varied selection of internship opportunities across different career fields
 - Other post-secondary opportunities for “people who don’t want to go to college”
 - Continuing to encourage and foster teacher-student relationships

Section 6

Satisfaction Survey Results

Satisfaction Survey Results

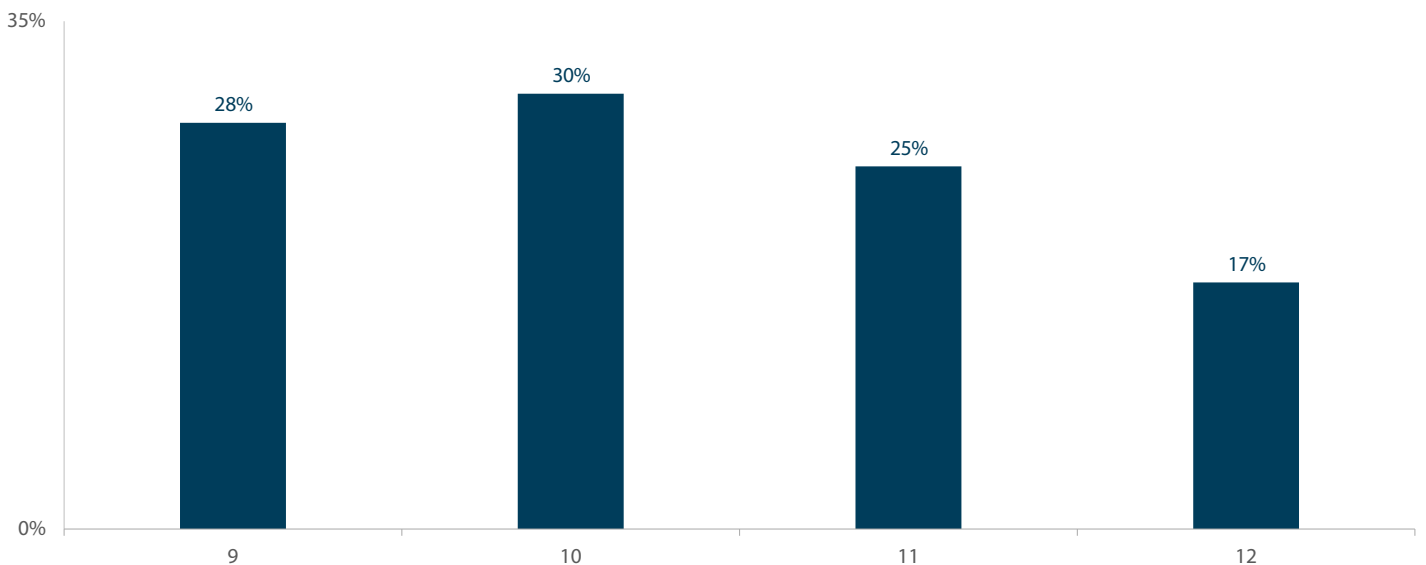
To better understand how AVID/TOPS students and staff experience the program, MMSD conducted two surveys to gather information on program satisfaction. In February 2023, one survey was distributed to AVID/TOPS students and the other survey was distributed to MMSD AVID staff and BGCDC TOPS staff. A total of 639 students and 39 staff responded to the survey for a student response rate of 66 percent and a staff response rate of 80 percent. Our evaluation of satisfaction with the AVID/TOPS program revealed high levels of satisfaction with the program overall for both staff and students. Both groups indicated high levels of satisfaction with components of the AVID

elective class and college field trips, while staff indicated that schoolwide components of AVID/TOPS are areas for improvement. We detail the survey results in detail below.

Student Survey Results

Respondents to the student survey consisted of AVID/TOPS students across grades 9-12, as seen in Figure 21. Fifty-eight percent of student respondents were in ninth or tenth grades, with 25 percent in eleventh and 17 percent in twelfth.

Figure 21: Student Survey Respondent Grade Level



Our examination of AVID/TOPS satisfaction revealed that over four-fifths of student respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with AVID/TOPS overall (Table 7). In particular, we found that student respondents had the highest levels of satisfaction with college field trips (81 percent very satisfied or satisfied) and the AVID/TOPS elective class (78 percent). While students responded that they had the lowest satisfaction with AVID tutorials (39 percent), only 15 percent reported dissatisfaction with this service (many students responded that they were “neutral”). Outside of AVID tutorials, a majority of students were satisfied with each of the other components on the survey. All of these sentiments were echoed in student focus groups.

The survey also inquired about students’ perceived level of preparedness for postsecondary education on a variety of factors. Table 8 shows the results from this inquiry. Responses indicated that students feel most prepared with their organizational and study skills (77 percent of respondents indicated very prepared or prepared) and least prepared financially (44 percent indicated very prepared or prepared). Again, the survey results are also reflected in our focus groups, with one representative student saying, “AVID did really help me prepare...for college.”

Table 7: Student Satisfaction with AVID/TOPS Components

	RESPONDENTS	% VERY SATISFIED	% SATISFIED	% NEUTRAL	% DISSATISFIED	% VERY DISSATISFIED
AVID/TOPS Overall	637	40%	43%	15%	1%	0%
AVID elective class	639	34%	44%	20%	2%	0%
AVID tutorials	634	11%	28%	40%	15%	6%
College field trips	637	47%	34%	15%	3%	1%
Community/guest speakers	636	27%	46%	25%	2%	1%
Career Development by TOPS	639	29%	37%	31%	2%	1%
College enrollment coaching and/or application support	639	36%	38%	24%	2%	0%

Table 8: Student Perceptions of Preparedness for Postsecondary Education

	RESPONDENTS	% VERY PREPARED	% PREPARED	% SOMEWHAT PREPARED	% UNPREPARED
Academic knowledge and skills	640	22%	48%	27%	3%
Organizational and study skills	640	31%	46%	21%	2%
Financially	637	12%	32%	41%	15%
Socially	637	24%	39%	30%	7%
Emotionally	636	18%	37%	35%	9%

Staff Survey Results

Our survey of AVID/TOPS staff indicated that 88 percent of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the program overall (Table 9). At the component level, we found that staff had the highest levels of satisfaction with AVID elective class instruction (87 percent very satisfied or satisfied), the program's focus on serving students in the middle academically with an interest in postsecondary education (85 percent), and AVID elective class curriculum (80 percent). Staff responses reflected dissatisfaction with many schoolwide components of AVID/TOPS, including leadership vision of high expectations (39 percent), culture (28 percent), leadership vision of college readiness (31 percent), systems of family outreach (29 percent), systems of professional learning (21 percent), systems of data collection (19 percent), and staff professional development opportunities (18 percent). Another AVID/TOPS component with a low level of indicated satisfaction was the AVID elective class tutoring (41 percent very satisfied or satisfied), which stands in contrast to otherwise positive perceptions of the AVID elective class from both staff and students.

Table 9: Staff Satisfaction with AVID/TOPS Components

	RESPONDENTS	% VERY SATISFIED	% SATISFIED	% NEUTRAL	% DISSATISFIED	% VERY DISSATISFIED
AVID/TOPS Overall	39	26%	62%	8%	5%	0%
Focus on students in the academic middle with an interest in postsecondary	39	36%	49%	13%	3%	0%
AVID elective class tutoring	39	8%	33%	21%	36%	3%
AVID elective class curriculum	39	18%	62%	15%	5%	0%
AVID elective class instruction	39	41%	46%	13%	0%	0%
College field trips	38	16%	50%	24%	11%	0%
Career development by TOPS	39	10%	46%	33%	10%	0%
Student mentoring	39	8%	51%	23%	13%	5%
College enrollment coaching and or application support	39	38%	36%	23%	3%	0%
TOPS College Success enrollment and matriculation support	38	21%	34%	37%	8%	0%
TOPS College Success coaching during postsecondary	37	14%	32%	49%	5%	0%
Schoolwide instructional strategies	38	11%	47%	29%	13%	0%
Schoolwide system of governance	38	0%	39%	47%	11%	3%
Schoolwide system of curriculum and instruction	39	0%	49%	41%	8%	3%
Schoolwide system of data collection	38	11%	37%	34%	16%	3%
Schoolwide system of professional learning	39	8%	49%	23%	18%	3%
Schoolwide system of family outreach	39	5%	28%	38%	21%	8%
Schoolwide leadership vision of college readiness	39	13%	38%	18%	28%	3%
Schoolwide leadership vision of high expectations	39	10%	33%	18%	31%	8%
Schoolwide culture	39	5%	36%	31%	28%	0%
Staff professional development opportunities	39	8%	38%	36%	18%	0%

Staff perceptions of student preparedness for postsecondary education were similar to student responses for organizational and study skills and emotional and social preparedness (Table 10). As with students, staff perceptions of students' organizational and study skills were high (79 percent very prepared or prepared). Relative to students, staff were less likely to report that students were academically prepared (52 percent prepared or very prepared as opposed to 70 percent of students) and financially prepared (32 percent of staff versus 44 percent of students).

Table 10: Staff Perceptions of Preparedness for Postsecondary Education

	RESPONDENTS	% VERY PREPARED	% PREPARED	% SOMEWHAT PREPARED	% UNPREPARED
Academically	38	5%	47%	47%	0%
Organizational and study skills	38	13%	66%	21%	0%
Financially	38	11%	21%	58%	11%
Socially	38	18%	50%	32%	0%
Emotionally	38	11%	50%	39%	0%

Section 7

Summary

Summary

The results presented in this evaluation indicate that AVID/TOPS participation is associated with large and significant gains in initial enrollment in postsecondary education, enrollment in the first three years after high school completion, postsecondary persistence, and completing an AA or BA degree within six years of high school completion. These findings are consistent, and often larger, across traditionally disadvantaged subgroups, demonstrating AVID/TOPS' success at accomplishing its stated goal of narrowing achievement gaps.

Although analyses of intermediate outcomes such as GPA and advanced course taking find positive but statistically non-significant results, AVID/TOPS' success at promoting postsecondary achievement is consistent with the AVID framework that focuses on culture and systems as well as academics. Focus groups found that AVID/TOPS students are overwhelmingly positive about the program, citing its strong community, positive peer groups, and individual program components, including substantial help with the college application process and covering application and other costs.

The results from student focus groups and surveys of satisfaction distributed to AVID/TOPS staff and students indicated high levels of satisfaction with both the program overall and many of the program components. Both staff and students responded with high satisfaction for college field trips, AVID/TOPS services, and career development by TOPS. One area of low satisfaction among staff respondents that may benefit from a further examination is schoolwide family outreach.

Section 8

Appendix

Appendix

Table 1: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Postsecondary and End-of-High School Outcomes for AVID/TOPS Students Who Participated in AVID/TOPS for Four Years

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

OUTCOME	IMPACT*
First Fall Postsecondary Enrollment	24.50 percentage points
Postsecondary Enrollment Within 3 Years	18.95 percentage points
Postsecondary Persistence	14.42 percentage points
AA or BA within 6 Years of HS Completion	15.13 percentage points
BA within 150% of Normal Time	2.40 percentage points
High School Completion within 4 Years	6.11 percentage points
High School Cumulative GPA	0.11 grade points
High School AP & Honors Credits	0.82 credits

Statistically Significant

* Impacts represent differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison group means for each outcome.

Table 2: AVID/TOPS Impacts on Postsecondary and End-of-High School Outcomes for AVID/TOPS Students Who Participated in AVID/TOPS for Fewer Than Four Years

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

OUTCOME	IMPACT*
First Fall Postsecondary Enrollment	8.91 percentage points
Postsecondary Enrollment Within 3 Years	5.97 percentage points
Postsecondary Persistence	-1.69 percentage points
AA or BA within 6 Years of HS Completion	-3.10 percentage points
BA within 150% of Normal Time	-0.15 percentage points
High School Completion within 4 Years	2.39 percentage points
High School Cumulative GPA	-0.11 grade points
High School AP & Honors Credits	0.02 credits


Statistically Significant

* Impacts represent differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison group means for each outcome.

Table 3: Cross-Sectional AVID/TOPS Impacts, 2018-19*

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

	DISTRICT	LOW- INCOME	STUDENTS OF COLOR	WHITE	LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR	MALE STUDENTS OF COLOR	ELL
Cumulative GPA	0.08	0.12	0.10	-0.09	0.13	0.10	0.19
Core GPA	0.08	0.12	0.11	-0.08	0.13	0.12	0.18
AP & Honors Credits	0.32	0.59	0.44	-0.47	0.64	0.47	0.83
AP & Honors GPA	0.09	0.16	0.11	-0.01	0.15	0.12	0.12
Absences**	-2.28	-2.79	-2.44	-1.09	-2.91	-2.50	-3.17
Unexcused Absences**	-2.54	-2.86	-2.61	-1.85	-2.86	-2.69	-3.73
Out-of-School Suspensions**	-0.03	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01
ACT Composite	0.22	0.54	0.44	-1.42	0.66	1.44	0.81

 Statistically Significant


* Impacts represent differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison group means for each outcome.

** For absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions, negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS

Table 4: Cross-Sectional AVID/TOPS Impacts, 2019-20*

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

	DISTRICT	LOW- INCOME	STUDENTS OF COLOR	WHITE	LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR	MALE STUDENTS OF COLOR	ELL
Cumulative GPA	0.10	0.16	0.11	0.03	0.17	0.13	0.18
Core GPA	0.10	0.15	0.11	0.03	0.16	0.12	0.18
AP & Honors Credits	0.29	0.53	0.38	-0.41	0.56	0.28	0.81
AP & Honors GPA	0.05	0.11	0.06	-0.02	0.11	0.06	0.16
Absences**	-1.32	-1.77	-1.47	0.29	-2.11	-2.87	-1.77
Unexcused** Absences	-1.68	-2.01	-1.82	-0.05	-2.32	-3.13	-2.02
Out-of-School Suspensions**	-0.05	-0.06	-0.05	-0.02	-0.06	-0.09	-0.02
ACT Composite	0.07	0.39	0.13	-0.35	0.37	0.32	0.88

 Statistically Significant


* Impacts represent differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison group means for each outcome.

** For absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions, negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS. The 2019-20 academic year was shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Students had fewer attendance days to accrue absences, unexcused absences, and out-of-school suspensions. As a result, we should expect smaller differences (impacts) between the AVID/TOPS and comparison groups.

Table 5: Cross-Sectional AVID/TOPS Impacts, 2020-21*

Impacts represent average differences between AVID/TOPS and control students

	DISTRICT	LOW- INCOME	STUDENTS OF COLOR	WHITE	LOW-INCOME STUDENTS OF COLOR	MALE STUDENTS OF COLOR	ELL
Cumulative GPA	0.19	0.24	0.23	-0.08	0.26	0.18	0.37
Core GPA	0.16	0.21	0.20	-0.11	0.22	0.14	0.32
AP & Honors Credits	0.37	0.49	0.39	0.25	0.49	0.16	0.80
AP & Honors GPA	0.06	0.10	0.09	-0.12	0.10	0.06	0.09
Absences**	-4.79	-5.82	-5.31	-1.15	-6.06	-5.01	-8.33
Unexcused Absences**	-4.93	-5.98	-5.46	-1.06	-6.19	-5.25	-8.15
Out-of-School Suspensions**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
ACT Composite	0.43	0.54	0.63	-1.82	0.58	0.20	0.54

 Statistically Significant

* Impacts represent differences in AVID/TOPS and comparison group means for each outcome.

** For absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions, negative values represent beneficial impacts of AVID/TOPS. During the COVID-19 pandemic, MMSD chose to remain virtual for most of 2020-21. As a result, out-of-school suspension data are incomplete.

