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By ROBERT PIERCE

- Daily Leader

In the next school year, the AVID (Advancement Via Individual

Determination) program will be expanded from its current eighth through 10th grade levels to both of Liberal's middle schools seventh grades and 11th in high school.

AVID is a comprehensive college-preparatory program designed to equip students in the academic middle with the knowledge and skills necessary for success at the college level.

These are typically students with ability but underserved and under- challenged. Students who choose to participate in the program are provided the support to achieve in high-rigor coursework.

Acceleration, not remediation, is a key component. Currently, both middle schools are involved in the application process for selection of the seventh and eighth grade AVID elective classes.

"We believe that personal attention is the key to a student's success," said Rita Williams, AVID USD No. 480 district director.

"AVID students receive one on one attention from their AVID elective teacher, trained college

and high school tutors, as well as faculty members involved with the program.”

Williams said students are able to succeed at the higher level advanced and AP courses due to instruction on note taking engaging in inquiry and support from specially trained tutors and staff.

“AVID students also benefit from classroom activities such as writing for all classes, applying for college, preparing for a professional career, visiting college campuses, interacting with guest speakers and participating in extracurricular and community activities,” she said.

In 2007-2008, about 88 percent of AVID students nationwide completed the coursework necessary for college entrance requirements. The national average for college entrance requirement completion was 36 percent.

In 2007-2008, 51 percent of AVID eighth graders enrolled in algebra.

Overall, in the U.S., 22 percent of eighth graders enrolled in algebra. It is the combination of determination, preparation and individual attention that has made the AVID program one of the most successful in the world.

Williams said AVID has been around since 1980 across the U.S.

“Right now, in the state of Kansas, Kansas City and Wichita are the only schools that have it,” she said. “Emporia High School’s going to start it next year. Garden City is looking at it. We are the only ones in the western part of the state that have the AVID program right now.”

Williams said AVID will teach organizational and note-taking skills, and it will get students ready for college academically because of the advanced classes they have to take.

“When they get over to their junior and senior year, our kids that are sophomores this year will learn about the process to apply for colleges, getting ready to take the college-readiness test, how to prepare for the ACT, how to prepare for the application process their senior year,” she said.

Each year, students are taken to visit colleges, according to Williams.

“We have to be accountable for 11 essentials,” she said. “One of those essentials is that we expose our students to colleges. This year, our sophomores in the fall went to West Texas A & M and visited. This spring, they went to Emporia. Our freshman kids went to Wichita State University. By the time they’ve become a senior, they’ve visited quite a few colleges, and they’ve learned a lot about the preparation that’s needed for when they go off to college.”

The Liberal AVID program is also supported through Seward County Community College two days a week through college tutors who come in and help students be successful in the advanced classes they have to take.

“Right now, we have about six or seven Seward County students that come to West, South and the high school here,” Williams said. “All these students have to take one or more advanced classes, and they have to take one AP class before they graduate from high school.”

AVID students are now required to follow the Kansas Board of Regents qualified admissions curriculum.

“Besides four years of English, most of them will probably have four years of math, four years of science,” Williams said. “They are taking those high level rigorous courses to be prepared for college and to not have to take any remedial classes when they start.”

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