

## Onward and Upward for All

Columbia Public Schools dedicates itself to assuring that our students not only graduate high school, but continue to be successful in their future endeavors. The CPS belief system is known as AEO—Achievement, Enrichment and Opportunity. The “A” stands for “All students graduate college or career-ready,” and recent data seem to back up this endeavor.

One program that exemplifies CPS’ dedication to graduation and adult-life preparation is the AVID system, which stands for **Achievement via Individual Determination**. Part of this system is an elective course that targets students in the academic middle – B, C, and even D students – who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard.

“These students are capable of completing rigorous curriculum, but are falling short of their potential. Oftentimes, they will be the first in their families to attend college, and some are from socioeconomically disadvantaged families,” says Shanna Dale, CPS AVID coordinator. “Other AVID students don’t fall into either of those areas—they just need a champion at school to help them achieve their goals.”

Teachers, administrators and faculty members typically recommend students for the program. The selection process usually involves an interview. Though AVID provides guidelines and expectations, final selections and processes are left to the schools.

The second part of AVID is the Schoolwide component. AVID is designed to impact the leadership, systems, instruction and culture of a school to support high expectations and levels of achievement for all students. AVID impacts students throughout the school when trained teachers use AVID strategies to influence the academic and behavioral skills of their students in all content classes. Although AVID is an elective course for selected students, all students will benefit because the methodologies, strategies, and expectations are schoolwide and impact the learning environment and culture of an entire campus.