

Via: <https://www.ajc.com/inspire/making-the-grade-avid-program-marks-10-years-at-riverwood/Q22I6GR7GJDXNDCMFEEEXLYT2ZE/>

[Education](#)

Making the Grade: AVID program marks 10 years at Riverwood



Credit: contributed

Riverwood High's Buck Jenkins (left) was one of the first teachers to join the school's AVID launch 10 years ago. Courtesy

By H.M. Cauley – For the AJC

2 hours ago

Ten years ago, teacher Buck Jenkins heard about a new program launching in Fulton County that got him so psyched, he signed on immediately. Though he's now in his 17th year teaching at Riverwood High in Sandy Springs, he's also marking a decade working exclusively with students in the Advancement Via Individual Determination support program.

"I was one of the first people involved in rolling it out when Fulton decided to try it," Jenkins said.

Aimed at seventh through 12 graders, AVID is a national program that provides academic resources and support for students who need an extra boost to be successful and move onto college or career. Depending on the semester, Riverwood has between 150 and 200 in the program.

“Our students are generally in the academic middle, but they can be very successful with that support,” said Jenkins. “We help them stay focused and on track through weekly tutorials, guest speakers once a month and building confidence and relationships.”

Students must apply and be accepted before they can schedule regular AVID classes into their school day. Those sessions are designed to hone their organizational, note-taking and reading skills, and help students see how mastering them fits into a bigger success scheme.

“The growth opportunities impact them the most,” said Jenkins. “It’s the college tours, the career workshops, the resume building and the leadership roles that resonate with them most.”

Since launching at Riverwood, 75% of AVID students have been the first in their families to consider college but have little knowledge of how to make that happen, said Jenkins.

“The goal is to expose them to as much college research and as many opportunities as possible so they fully understand what the future can hold,” he said. “A lot of them have never been on a college campus and have no clue how the process works. Giving them that support goes a long way to helping them realize they can accomplish their goals.”

While no specific statistics rate the program’s success, Jenkins said he measures its impact by the high number of students who move on to rigorous courses such as Advance Placement, honors, dual enrollment or International Baccalaureate. “Getting them comfortable enough to take those courses can lead to tremendous success,” he said.

He also gives AVID high marks for getting students to set and achieve goals. “The first thing we do is establish goals, and then my role is to help each student make them a reality. When they graduate, they’re prepared to move on with pursuing those goals. And based on that, AVID has been very successful.”