



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fontana Unified's Citrus Elementary School Fosters Student Success, College Readiness through AVID

FONTANA, CA – Citrus Elementary School fifth-grade students held flags and banners aloft, waved blue and yellow pompoms and shouted “U-C-L-A, fight, fight, fight!” in honor of their adopted homeroom university during a college day rally designed to encourage Citrus students to plan their future in higher education.

The monthly rallies are just one element of Citrus Elementary's schoolwide College Bound initiative that includes instruction provided by the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) college-prep program. Every Citrus class, from kindergarten to grade six, employs AVID strategies that help students organize their tools, time and thought to spur student achievement and inspire students to think of college as their destiny.

“The main goal of AVID is to make students college- and career-ready so that by the time they finish their senior year they can choose whichever path they want,” Citrus Principal Mike McGirr said. “AVID does that by teaching the hidden skills, like organization, that typically is not explicitly taught in regular math or language arts classes. At Citrus, AVID is embedded into all our classes. We really like the program.”

Using a template created by the Riverside Inyo Mono San Bernardino (RIMS) AVID organization, Citrus was the first FUSD elementary school to adopt the college-prep program in 2018. Citrus provides students with all the tools they need for learning organizational skills, including notebooks, binders, folders and dividers. Students learn to develop their own calendars and agendas and how to take notes.

The College Bound AVID culture is enhanced by activities like the monthly college day rallies, led by the school's beloved Sun mascot, where K-6 classes compete to see who has the most college spirit, and three classes are chosen to perform a college chant. The winning class receives a pizza party and a giant trophy. Additionally, Citrus front office clerk Gabrielle Ruiz designs popular custom-made AVID T-shirts with “Encanto” and “Star Wars” themes that are given out to all the students.

“It's a pretty fun program. It helps me with my listening and reading and math so I can understand what's going on,” Citrus fifth-grade student Delilah Rodriguez said. “My favorite subjects are biology and social studies. I want to go to UCLA someday.”

MORE

OUR MISSION: The mission of the Fontana Unified School District is to graduate all students prepared to succeed in a changing world. Fontana Unified School District celebrates learning through the development of the whole child. Our commitment to excellence provides quality education, in depth, for all students.



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In John Johnson's sixth-grade class, students use AVID strategies to help navigate their grammar lessons. Johnson likes the way AVID helps students break down the text and analyze their lessons, leading to a more critical reading of the text and better understanding.

"I definitely recommend AVID for elementary schools," Johnson said. "My students are learning that reading is a tool for academic success. When my students break out into small groups, team leaders will initiate a discussion that digs deeper into the lesson. This helps develop character and leadership skills. We also have a public speaking component in class, which helps students develop confidence."

Citrus and the other FUSD elementary schools who employ AVID – including Canyon Crest, Kathy Binks, Mango, Shadow Hills, Sierra Lakes, Tokay and Primrose – are supported by RIMS AVID program specialists who visit the school sites, assist with long-term planning and collect data on student success.

"Fontana Unified is deeply committed to ensuring that every student has an opportunity for academic success and to pursue their college and career goals," Interim Superintendent Juan M. López said. "AVID has helped so many students prepare for the rigors of higher education but it is rarely used at the elementary school level. This forward-looking approach will produce a new generation of future leaders."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_CITRUS_AVID1: Citrus Elementary School fifth-grader Delilah Rodriguez studies with the help of the college-prep program AVID. Citrus Elementary employs AVID strategies to help students organize their tools, time and thought and inspire students to think of college as their destiny. Rodriguez dreams of someday attending UCLA.

FUSD_CITRUS_AVID2: RIMS AVID program specialist Cristina San-Nicholas checks the three-ring binder of a Citrus Elementary School fourth-grade student. Citrus Elementary embeds the college-prep program into all of its classes, helping students hone their organizational skills to help them prepare for the rigors of higher education.

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