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Students eyeing college get \$9.5 million boost from area foundation

College Spark Washington awards major grant to help low-income students prepare for college

OLYMPIA — Two statewide programs that help and encourage Washington high school students prepare for college educations will get significant financial support from a long-term initiative announced this week.

College Spark Washington, an education foundation supporting programs that help low-income students become college-ready and earn their degrees, anticipates investing in a nine-year, \$9.5 million College Readiness Initiative implemented by OSPI.

The initiative will support and enhance two key programs that keep students focused on their education options beyond high school:

- **Navigation 101**, a statewide, school-based effort that provides personalized support to all students and their families throughout four years of high school and helps them chart their post-secondary paths
- **Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)**, a college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students (particularly those in the academic middle) enrolling in four-year colleges

Target schools to be funded by the initiative include those with high percentages of students living in poverty and/or high percentages of ethnic minority students.

OSPI will receive \$225,000 in the coming year to finalize an initiative work plan, reach out to schools eligible to participate in the initiative, and design a process to select up to 16 school districts to participate in a demonstration project. Once the initiative plan is in place and schools are selected, OSPI will administer up to \$1.3 million annually in grants to participating schools over six years to invest in Navigation 101 and AVID programs.

Additional grant money will be used to increase the capacity of schools to offer challenging college prep courses, evaluate the program and share results.

“The goal of our College Readiness Initiative is simple: Help more low-income students not only think seriously about attending college, but provide them with the skills and support they need to enroll in college and succeed,” said Terry Bergeson, Washington superintendent of public instruction. “I am so grateful that College Spark has seen the potential of the Navigation 101 and AVID programs to inspire and help far more students believe in and achieve the dream of a college education. This grant will help us touch thousands of students in life-changing ways.”

“Over the past 30 years low-income students and students of color have made significant gains in college access, but too many of these students start college without the skills they need to succeed,” said Heather Gingerich, senior program officer at College Spark. “Students that have to begin their college career in remediation courses are still far less likely to go on to earn a degree than other students.

“We’re investing in Navigation 101 and AVID because both programs address a critical aspect of college readiness. Navigation 101 helps students become motivated to sign up for and succeed in challenging college-prep classes. This may be sufficient for some students, but others will need the academic support provided by AVID to master higher level coursework.”

Both Navigation 101 and AVID have demonstrated effectiveness at increasing the number of low-income students who graduate with the skills and high school transcript they need to succeed in higher education.

Navigation 101 is a comprehensive guidance and advising system that increases students’ motivation to register for the courses they’ll need to be college-ready. Features of Navigation 101 include:

- Curriculum-driven advisories that students attend at least twice a month with a consistent group of peers and adult advisory leader
- Portfolios that students create to establish goals and monitor progress toward those goals
- Student-led conferences, where students discuss their achievements and plans with parents and/or other family members and their advisory leader
- Student-driven scheduling, where students are encouraged to select challenging courses and schools organize course scheduling around students’ choices

As an elective course, AVID increases students’ abilities to do well in college-prep courses. Students participate in peer tutorials with a trained tutor-facilitator, and take part in workshops that increase their organization, time management and study skills. AVID also enrolls students in Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, honors, and other dual credit or college preparation-level classes, and gives them tools they need to succeed in those courses. AVID professional development activities also help teachers better support students with diverse skills succeed in challenging courses.

“AVID has a proven track record in closing achievement gaps, increasing the number of students ready for and accepted to college, and creating a stronger culture of high expectations in schools and districts,” said Sue Bergman, Washington state director for AVID Center. “The College Spark grant will allow AVID programs throughout Washington to grow beyond ‘targeted interventions’ and truly become a philosophy and a process that permeates every classroom.”

Some of the districts receiving the College Spark grants will implement both Navigation 101 and AVID programs in tandem, and work collaboratively to learn from each other’s expertise.

About OSPI

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington state. Led by State School Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson, OSPI works with the state’s 295 school districts and nine educational service districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students.

For more information, visit the OSPI Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us>.

About College Spark

College Spark Washington is an education foundation with a mission to fund programs that help low-income students become college-ready and earn their degrees. The foundation makes grants to organizations and institutions throughout Washington state that are helping low-income students improve their academic achievement, prepare for college life and graduate from college. Since beginning grant-making in 2005, College Spark has awarded over \$10 million in grants to college readiness and degree completion programs and funded six Washington community colleges’ participation in Achieving the Dream, a national initiative focused on helping more community college students succeed.

For more information, visit the College Spark Web site at <http://www.collegespark.org>.

About AVID

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a college-readiness system designed to increase the number of students who enroll in four-year colleges. Although AVID serves all students, it focuses on the least-served students in the academic middle. AVID students are enrolled in a school’s toughest classes, such as Advanced Placement, and receive support in an academic elective class – called AVID – taught within the school day by a trained AVID teacher. AVID has been adopted by more than 3,500 schools in 45 states, the District of Columbia and 15 countries, and serves more than 250,000 students in grades 4-12.

For more information, visit the AVID Web site at <http://www.avidonline.org>.

About Navigation 101

Navigation 101 is a life skills and planning program for students in grades six through 12. It aims to help students make clear, careful, and creative plans for life beyond high school. It is designed to equalize opportunities, encourage student engagement; enhance student achievement, involve parents and guardians, and strengthen community through implementation of its five elements. Originally developed and legislatively funded in 2006, the Navigation 101 program provided grant

funding to 223 schools (including several elementary schools) in 103 school districts this past year to begin the development of the program.

For more information, visit the Navigation 101 Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us/navigation101>

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