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News Release

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Riverwood International Charter School graduates first cohort of AVID students

Riverwood International Charter School (RICS) just graduated its first cohort of students from Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), a college-readiness program designed to increase school-wide learning and performance for all students, especially those in diverse and underrepresented demographic groups. RICS adopted AVID in 2014, and many Fulton County Schools on all learning levels, including RICS' feeder Ridgeview Charter School (middle), have implemented the program as well. Funded by the Riverwood Foundation and a generous grant from the Sandy Springs Society, AVID teacher training and implementation began in the summer of 2014, and the first group began the program as ninth graders that fall.

Buck Jenkins, Riverwood's AVID Coordinator and Coach, concludes "As an educator, the AVID program has been an amazing experience. To work with such incredible educators and students is every teacher's dream. To assist our first graduating class and to watch them work hard to achieve their college goals is something that can't be measured."

AVID graduate Georgia Ramos states, "Without AVID I am unsure of where I would stand... I'm not sure I would have gotten so far because this program always pushed me to my limits and helped me to succeed."

Of the **27** seniors completing the four-year program this May, all but one have already determined which college they will attend this fall. While most have applied to in-state schools, several are enrolled in out-of-state institutions.

Flor Valle, another AVID graduate, says "I realized that AVID was not just a class and the students weren't just classmates - we were all family. AVID will forever be an unforgettable experience. I gained many skills that I need for college like being more organized, always having a set schedule, and doing more than what is expected. Socially, I have gained more confidence and would like to continue to take risks and going out of my comfort zone, just as Coach Jenkins pushed us to do."

This coming school year, 138 students across all grade levels will participate in Riverwood's 2018-19 AVID program, with each subsequent class having a larger number of participants. Furthermore, after the summer 2018 teacher training, half of the entire academic staff will be AVID trained, and will be implementing program strategies throughout the school.

AVID graduate Xavier Palacios explains "AVID gave us a curve on college preparedness that was essential for the college process. Many students in the program come from backgrounds with parents who haven't gone through that process, so having this experience was key. Here, I worked on my procrastination, neatness and presentation weekly, and had an entire support system of teachers who wanted to help me."

Continued funding from the Riverwood Foundation and grants totaling more than \$25,000 from the Sandy Springs Society from 2014 - 2016 provides employee training, supports college field trips, tutors, and classroom technology, and exposed students to post-high school opportunities. Tutors provide critical academic support and have access to iPads to enhance the tutoring sessions while reinforcing digital literacy.

For more information about the program, contact Brenda Maddaleni, Riverwood Communications Manager, bmaddaleni@gmail.com or Lynne Miller, Riverwood Communications Director, led.miller@icloud.com.

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About the Fulton County School System. The Fulton County School System is the fourth largest school system in Georgia. More than 95,000 students attend 106 schools in the cities of Alpharetta, Chattahoochee Hills, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Johns Creek, Milton, Mountain Park, Palmetto, Roswell, Sandy Springs, South Fulton and Union City.