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Director of



From left: Mariah Vela, Marcus Robinson, Talia Brown, Branden Mead, Sergio Meza, Kaewsuwan Xiong.

AVID /TOPS is a collaboration between the Madison Metropolitan School District and the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County that is working hard—and succeeding—in putting high school students on the college path. AVID/TOPS prepares low-income and underrepresented students for four-year college eligibility and provides them with financial assistance.

AVID, which stands for “Advancement Via Individual Determination,” is a nationally recognized program that focuses on acceleration rather than remediation for

Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE) assesses students’ progress in the AVID /TOPS program, which teaches them how to study and encourages accelerated outcomes. The program and assessment are funded through a combination of public and private dollars. The studies carried out by WISCAPE show increased academic success for students like these Madison East High School participants.



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students in the “academic middle.” These students have college ambitions and a willingness to work hard. TOPS, or “Teens of Promise,” is a program developed and implemented by the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County to complement the AVID curriculum.

“Kids in AVID/TOPS are outperforming their peers,” said Nichelle Nichols, chief academic officer at the Boys & Girls Club. “They looked the same (as a comparison group) academically in eighth grade. It tells a story.”

The success, she said, can be found through the results of studies done by the [Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education](#) (WISCAPE), which is housed in the University of Wisconsin- Madison’s [School of Education](#).

WISCAPE is studying the effects of the AVID/TOPS program on students’ postsecondary outcomes. The results show that AVID/TOPS students’ grade point averages are higher, students are enrolling in more advanced placement and honors courses, they attend school more frequently, and they get into less trouble than a comparable group of their peers.

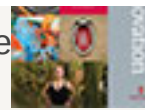
“The fact that we have independent assessment and evaluation gives us incredible credibility,” Nichols said.

“There’s a sense that raising expectations for kids, encouraging them to take rigorous courses and supporting this can make a difference,” said Eleni Schirmer at WISCAPE.

This unique collaboration between the school district, the Boys & Girls Club and the university, is valuable for everybody, she said. “It’s exciting to help these two worlds speak together.”



This story was featured in the Annual Report. To read more stories or review financial reports, [view the 2012 Annual Report](#).



Ann Grauvogl - August 7th, 2013



2012 annual report, annual report, impact of gifts, school of education, w iscape



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Photo courtesy of David Nevala.

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