

Glassboro Public School District Fostering Diverse Schools Demonstration Grant Application

The Glassboro Public School District, which serves more than 1,800 students in grades pre-K through twelve, is seeking additional funding to support and expand several initiatives which will promote socioeconomic diversity and provide a safe, inclusive environment for all learners. Both the community and the school district celebrate, value, and promote diversity while simultaneously offering rigorous coursework to prepare all students, regardless of background, for post-secondary success.

The Borough of Glassboro has always been a diverse, working-class town dating back to its origins as a manufacturing hub responsible for crafting glass receptacles for companies both large and small. Rowan University, which is celebrating its 100th anniversary, has helped transform and expand the Borough. While Rowan has attracted professors and academics from all over the country, the town has retained its blue-collar roots; the community is perhaps more diverse than ever. To reach learners of all races, cultures, religions, and income levels, Glassboro Public School District has expanded its academic programming and support systems.

To provide equal opportunities for all students, the Glassboro Public School District has required access to advanced level coursework to be accessible to everyone, regardless of educational history. To support students as they embark on rigorous and demanding coursework, especially future first-generation college students, students from underrepresented groups, and students with limited financial resources, the AVID program has been adopted for the 2022-2023 school year. Though the program is currently offered to students in grades 8-10, plans to expand one grade level up and one grade level down each year have been formed.

Need for Project

- (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed:**
Despite an influx of students, a need for academic programming, and a need for social emotional learning/character education, the Glassboro Public School District has battled reductions in state and federal funding, inhibiting the district's ability to offer rigorous courses and comprehensive support, especially for economically disadvantaged and at-risk students, which account for over 38% of the population. Only 12.8% of students in Glassboro Public Schools elect to enroll in an AP course, compared to the state average of 34.5%. Only 7.1% of these students are economically disadvantaged.
- (ii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps:**
The Glassboro Public Schools offers after school and extended school year support to students in need of academic assistance; this includes transportation and meals. Access to Honors and Advanced Placement courses at the secondary level has provided equal opportunities to all students, regardless of background or academic history. The AVID program has been offered to students at the secondary level to provide systems of support and resources for exploring post-secondary paths. The

district wide CITRS initiative promotes positive practices and social emotional learning to improve school climate.

Project Design

(i) Goals, objectives, and outcomes are specified and measurable:

- To increase enrollment in Honors level and Advanced Placement courses at the secondary level by 20% by 2025.
- To increase enrollment in the AVID Elective course by 50% each school year through the 2025-2026 school year.
- To reduce Tier 1 infractions by 25%, Tier 2 infractions by 25%, and Tier 3 infractions by 35%, district-wide, by the year 2025.

(ii) The design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs:

Historically, benchmark data, standardized test data, and discipline data has indicated that minority male students and special education students are underperforming while other demographic groups perform at a rate reflective of the state or national average.

(iii) The project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of federal financial assistance:

The project goals are designed to be permanent ongoing solutions to address targeted areas in need of improvement.

(iv) Project reflects up-to-date knowledge from research and effective practice:

John Hattie's *Visible Knowledge* (2008) explains the importance of collective teacher efficacy and its profound impact on student achievement. The CITRS initiative will reinforce the self-perception that teachers make a difference to their students, perhaps even more than students' homes and the surrounding community. Feedback to students, class discussion, metacognition strategies, and problem-solving strategies, four very important influences on student achievement, according to Hattie, are embedded in the AVID Elective course and advanced level coursework.

(v) Applicant demonstrates that it has resources to operate the project beyond the length of the grant including a multi-year financial and operating model and accompanying plan; the demonstrated commitment of any partners; evidence of broad support from stakeholders (such as State educational agencies and teachers' unions) critical to the project's long-term success; or more than one of these types of evidence:

The district is committed to expanding courses at the secondary level as evidenced by the hiring of two additional teachers, one at the Thomas E. Bowe Middle School and one at Glassboro High School. For the 2022-2023 school year, the Glassboro Public School District formed an AVID Site Team, which required the selection and training of eight staff members, including a dedicated AVID Elective teacher. For the 2023-2024 school year, the district selected and trained two additional AVID Elective teachers and seven staff members to serve on the AVID Site Team. Two teachers were selected to teach AP courses and were trained through College Board.

To assist with the implementation of the CITRS initiative, over twenty-five administrators, teachers, and counselors were selected to serve on the district Character Council or as building level Character Champions. These staff members

have been provided with substitutes and release time to attend monthly meetings, to prepare materials, and to implement building-wide events. The district's mission and vision have been redeveloped to reflect the CITRS initiative. Each of the four buildings in the district has been awarded by Character.org for its Promising Practices. This important milestone is a critical step in the process of applying for and receiving the recognition of a National School of Character.

Project Services

- (i) **The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability:**

The CITRS Character Council and building level Character Champions include members of diverse backgrounds. The CITRS initiative is committed to improving culture and climate in each building, particularly by increasing teacher efficacy and by providing positive practices to ensure success. Respect, justice, fortitude, integrity, and charity are just a few of the core virtues upheld and celebrated in each school throughout the district.

- (ii) **The likely impact of the services to be provided by the proposed project on the intended recipients of those services:**

Underrepresented groups and underperforming subgroups will be impacted most by the expansion of the CITRS, AVID, and advanced classes.

- (iii) **The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project are focused on those with the greatest needs:**

While the initiatives have been adopted with the intent of improving the achievement of all learners, students of underrepresented groups and economically disadvantaged students will be significantly impacted.

Project Personnel

- (i) **The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have historically been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability:**

The Glassboro Public School District attends career fairs and college campuses in the tri-state area to recruit individuals of diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Additionally, advisory committees and leadership teams are composed of individuals from a variety of ages, races, national origins, and religions.

- (ii) **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel:**

The key project personnel hold the appropriate certifications and many hold advanced degrees, which either meet or exceed the requirements of their position within the district. Every staff member has received training on the CITRS program and will receive additional training, along with a keynote speech, during the opening day in-service. The CITRS Character Council and CITRS Character Champions are comprised of members from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities, and experiences. Most of the faculty teaching Honors and AP classes hold a master's degree in his/her

content area and all have been trained by College Board. The AVID Site Team and each AVID Elective teacher has received extensive training on the program and its implementation. The AVID Elective teachers, the AVID Site Coordinator, and the AVID District Director receive ongoing training.

Adequacy of Resources

(i) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project:

The Boys & Girls Club of Glassboro, Glassboro Child Development Centers (GCDC), Glassboro Little League, Glassboro Midget Football, and the Glassboro Rotary Club have close relationships with Glassboro Public School District. Many students in grades K-8 attend the Boys & Girls Club and GCDC; staff from these organizations are currently employed or have worked in Glassboro Public Schools. Each organization supports Glassboro schools and its endeavors, especially those that seek to enrich students in every grade level.

(ii) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project:

The Glassboro Public School District has utilized local, state, and federal funding to support these initiatives and the recurring costs have been embedded in the annual budget. Both CITRS and AVID have combined annual costs of almost seventy thousand dollars for materials and programming. AVID and advanced courses require teacher training, opportunities for meetings, and curriculum writing. These expenses are allocated through Title funding. Additional support, particularly additional personnel, will allow the district to expand more rapidly and to ensure permanence.

Management Plan

(i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks:

Both central administration and building level administration staff have been deployed to oversee the policies and initiatives. Subcommittees of teachers, administrators, counselors, and support staff have been formed and meet regularly to evaluate progress and plan future steps. The responsibilities are as follows:

1. Chief Academic Officer: oversees all curricular programming and is responsible for forming and directing administrators/committees.
2. Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, English/Language Arts and Social Studies: oversees AVID, serves as Character Council member.
3. Building Principals: oversee CITRS Character Council and Character Champions members at the building level. Plan/execute building level events/objectives, then disseminate them to building level staff, students, and family members.
4. CITRS Character Council: disseminates character virtues, lessons, and signage. Organizes, supports, and attends events.
5. CITRS Character Champions Team: reinforces the mission, vision, and core values of the district and the CITRS initiative, leading by example.

6. AVID Site Team: identifies potential AVID students, organizes guest speakers, oversees AVID tutors, implements AVID lessons/strategies in his/her own classrooms, and communicates information regarding the program to the school community at large.
7. Department Chairs: disseminate course information, both written and oral, to students and families, assist with scheduling courses.
8. Counselors: schedule AP course sections and enroll students, schedule and supervise AP exam testing.
9. EAB survey committee: responsible for disseminating surveys, analyzing quantitative/qualitative data, scheduling/performing follow-up interviews to obtain specific data, and using data to provide support.

(ii) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project:

The system of subcommittees, each responsible for specific tasks, ensures that each task is completed within a required timeframe and that data is collected, analyzed, and used to drive future decisions.

(iii) How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate:

The Glassboro Public School District holds family/community nights for academic programming, clubs, sports, and activities. At these events, parents and stakeholders are invited to attend and provide input.

Project Evaluation

(i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide valid and reliable performance data on relevant outcomes:

The methods of evaluation include both quantitative and qualitative data, obtained by a variety of objective methods.

(ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible:

The success of open advanced level courses, the AVID Elective course, and the CITRS character initiative will receive ongoing evaluation by measuring a variety of quantitative and qualitative data points. These forms of data include: NWEA MAP Benchmark scores, EAB climate and culture survey feedback, NJSLA scores, AP Exam scores, graduation rate, chronic absenteeism rate, and referral numbers, classified by tier.

Application must include:

- How plan will be developed or enhanced
- Include a description of students, families, and school communities served, with disaggregated demographic data
- How results will be documented and disseminated to increase capacity of other LEAs to implement similar programs
- Timeline and approach for an assessment of geographic area to be served
- Timeline and approach for stakeholder engagement
- Action steps and timeline to produce the plan

Application must:

- Provide evidence the plan is based on a comprehensive assessment of the geographic area to be served
- Demonstrate that the plan is based on rigorous family, student, community, and educator engagement
- Document commitment to ambitious, achievable goals for increasing socioeconomic diversity
- Transparent, published data analysis of progress relative to those goals