

Early impacts of the AVID program on access to post-secondary education in British Columbia

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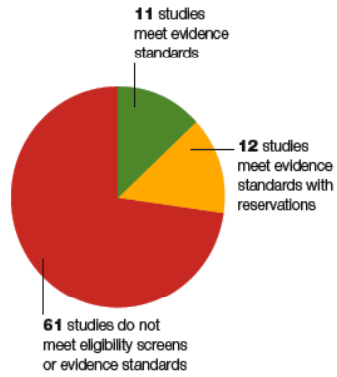
BC AVID Pilot Project is an example of a rigorous policy demonstration using random assignment

- Large-scale demonstration project with over 1500 participants
- Created by MOU between the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and the British Columbia Ministry of Education
- Tests a BC version of a US college-preparatory program called AVID (Advancement Via individual Determination)
- Implementation by 18 pilot sites, with support from an existing BC AVID School District
- SRDC undertaking evaluation of implementation, impacts and benefit–cost analysis



Rigorous evaluations of the impacts of education interventions are rare...

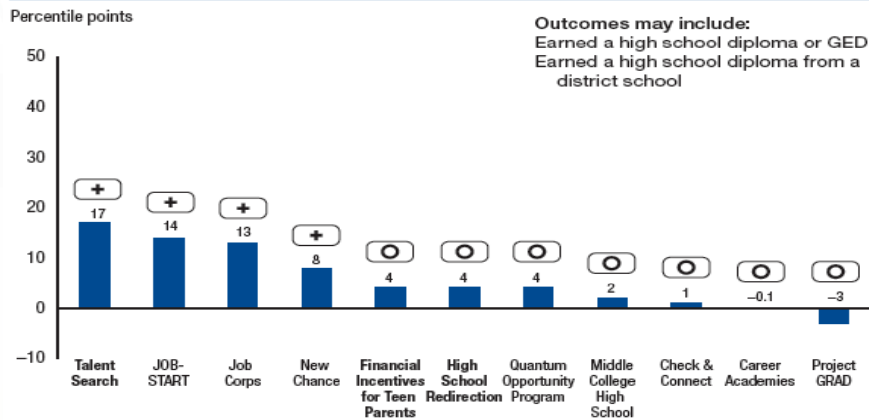
- The US Government Institute for Educational Sciences “What Works Clearinghouse” compiles findings from evaluations of education interventions
- Few studies meet their “evidence standards”: a randomized controlled trial or a quasi-experimental design with evidence of equating between the treatment and comparison groups



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...and evidence of large impacts from rigorous evaluations' is rarer still

Figure 3 Completing school: average improvement



Note: Bold text indicates interventions with a medium to large extent of evidence.

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BC AVID may overcome barriers to PSE for select students

- Needs assessment: Middle achieving high school students in BC capable of enrolling in and completing post-secondary education are not doing so, perhaps due to lack of support for their academic study.
- Policy question: Can an intervention in the form of an elective class – offered to such students in Grades 9 through 12 help them to access post-secondary education?
- Demonstration: Research project to undertake a fair and rigorous test of the effectiveness of such an intervention by:
 - Training school site teams to select eligible students and deliver the AVID program
 - Randomly assigning the eligible students to program and comparison groups, subject to research follow up over time
 - Delivering AVID to the program group according to the AVID program requirements

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AVID is about “learning to learn”: enabling access to more rigorous courses

- Intended to help middle-achieving (often ethnic minority) students access the most rigorous courses in high school, to apply successfully for university.
- At its core, AVID is a year-round elective class that provides support to students who otherwise would be expected to struggle with rigorous curriculum.
- AVID program is overseen by non-profit AVID Center, which trains “AVID site teams” of 8+ educators at each site and annually certifies sites on their program delivery.
- There are 11 Essentials that the site team must implement for the school’s program to carry the AVID label.

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7 of 11 AVID Essentials focus on program administration

- Selection – students should be drawn from the academic middle
- Participation – voluntary for staff and students
- Scheduling – year-long within regular academic timetable, including motivational activities and field trips, speakers and campus visits
- Rigour – courses should meet PSE requirements
- Data – AVID monitors student numbers and achievement
- Resources – identified in advance
- School site team – interdisciplinary team

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4 AVID Essentials guide program content

- Writing – strong writing curriculum
- Inquiry – as basis for instruction
- Collaboration – regular use in classroom
 - Reading - critical reading, and reading for content
- Tutorials – to tackle student-generated problems in small topic-based groups, ideally led by existing post-secondary students, trained as tutors

Allocation of class time:

- Curriculum class, instruction from AVID teacher (40%)
- Tutorials (40%)
- Motivational activities incl. field trips (20%)

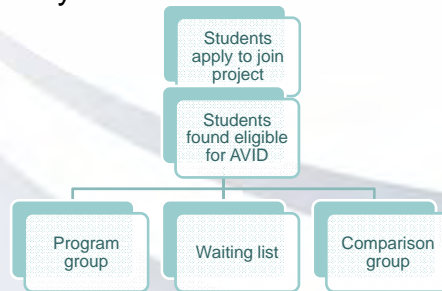
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The BC AVID Pilot Project has a specific research question

- Are AVID-eligible students offered a place in the AVID elective class more likely to access PSE than if they took existing high school electives?

To answer this question requires a “counterfactual”:

- How many students selected for AVID would go on to PSE even if they did not take AVID?



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The Interim Impacts Report results will be published in Summer 2010: final results still to come

- Results on the first three years of BC AVID delivery to both cohorts (Grades 9-11)
 - Implementation
 - Interim impacts to the end of Grade 11 (for random assignment sites only)
- AVID Center anticipated an “implementation dip” as students struggle initially engaging with new, rigorous curriculum. Performance improves through support of AVID class, learned strategies and techniques
- The research question will not be answered until 2012
 - Data are not yet available.

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BC AVID is a very comprehensive evaluation, with multiple data sources used in the report

- Qualitative data:
 - AVID program manuals and guides
 - Interviews with educators [Focus groups in final report*] (n=128)
 - Observations from site visits (n=62)
 - Support & Feedback (monitoring) reports
- Quantitative data:
 - Baseline survey of students in Grade 8 and their parents
 - Grade 11 online survey of students [Grade 12* and post-secondary surveys* in final report]
 - Administrative data provided by schools re: student and tutor attendance, class activities, class departures and additions
 - Student records from school districts and BC Ministry of Education [Admin data on post-secondary outcomes (enrolment and financing) in final report]

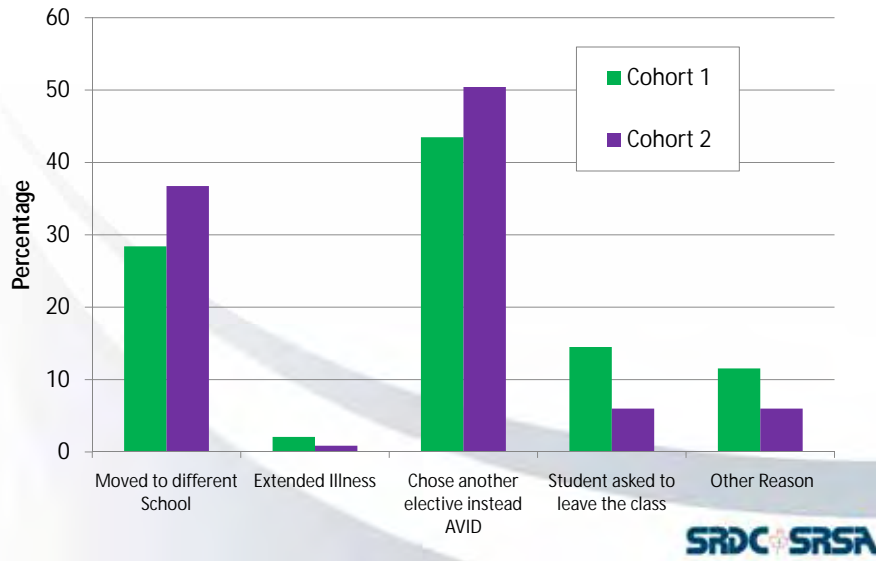
*Student feedback on outcomes yet to be analyzed. 

Participation of the program group declined from Grade 9 to Grade 11

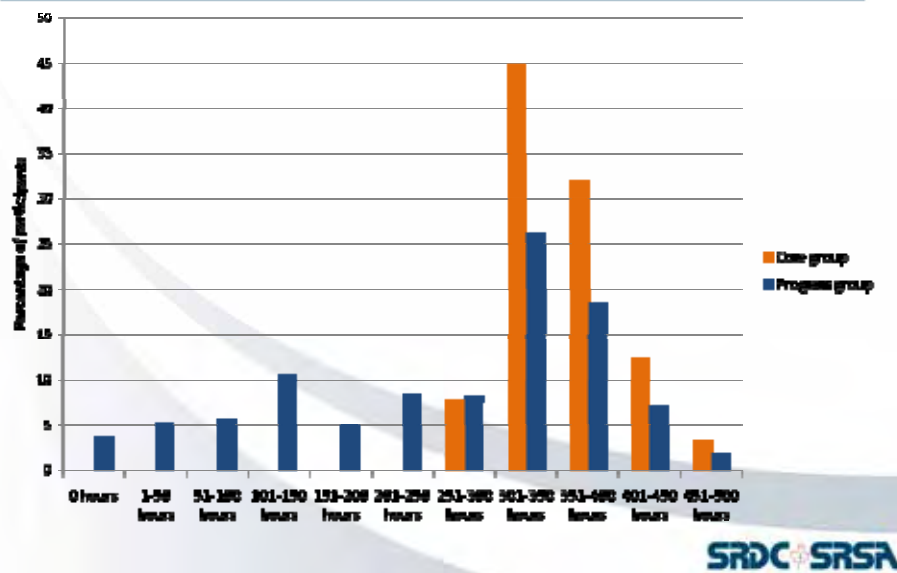
- Departures must be expected from an elective class offered to “mobile” students.
- Nearly all (96.2%) in program group took up the offer but half (51.7%) had left the AVID class by the end of Grade 11.
- Those departing had similar characteristics to program group, except:
 - more departed from Cohort 1 (56%) than Cohort 2 (45%);
 - 43.5% of departing students were from lower income families compared to 34.2% of those who stayed in the class.
- Five per cent of those departing the class later returned.



Reasons given for departures from BC AVID



Hours of BC AVID class exposure Grades 9-11 among program and long-term AVID students

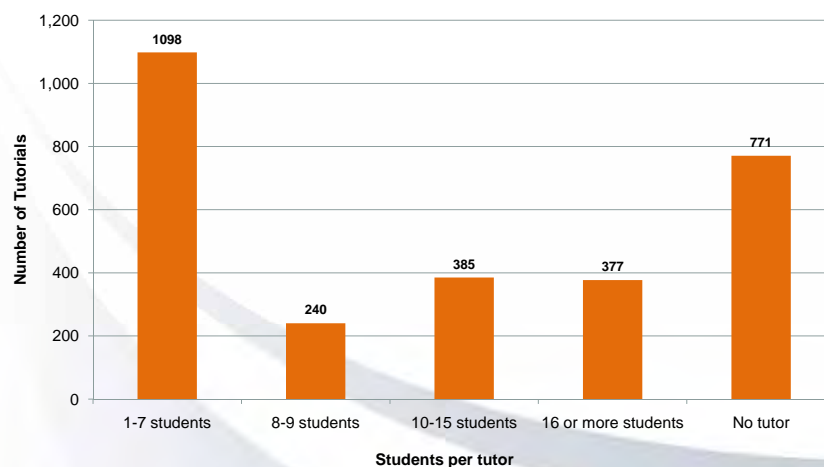


Challenges in implementation meant certain aspects of BC AVID did not match AVID model

- Sustaining the program took much more staff time and effort than expected at the outset;
- Rigour was not clearly defined for the BC context so local interpretations of rigorous courses varied;
- Scheduling BC AVID was extremely challenging, especially within a semestered, rotating-block timetable;
- BC school schedules provided less time overall for AVID,
- The ratio of class activities did not match model. BC AVID students received half the recommended tutorial time;
- Only a minority of these tutorials met program expectations

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Tutor-student ratios only met expectations in 36 per cent of Grade 9-11 tutorials



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Other aspects of BC AVID matched AVID model

- Participation was voluntary for staff and students;
- AVID was generally scheduled as a year-long program within the regular school timetable;
- Schools offered all required elements – curriculum class, tutorials, and motivational activities;
- Curriculum class implementation matched expectations;
- Field trips exceeded expectations;
- Teachers highly valued AVID professional development.

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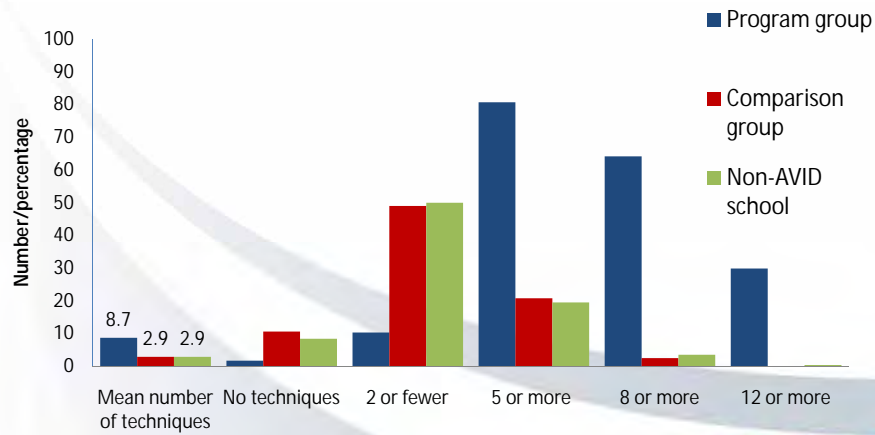
Over 3 years, the program group experienced more AVID strategies than the comparison group

- Survey responses from students in the AVID program group were compared to those in the comparison group to see if there had been “spill over” of AVID techniques;
- Even though a few students in the comparison group reported learning and using AVID techniques, levels were substantially higher among program group students – differences were often more than 60 percentage points;
- SRDC also did a special survey at 7 non-AVID schools and found the same levels of use reported there as among the comparison group, so there is background use of some AVID strategies in BC;
- These large treatment differentials mean it is unlikely that the estimates of program impact will be biased.

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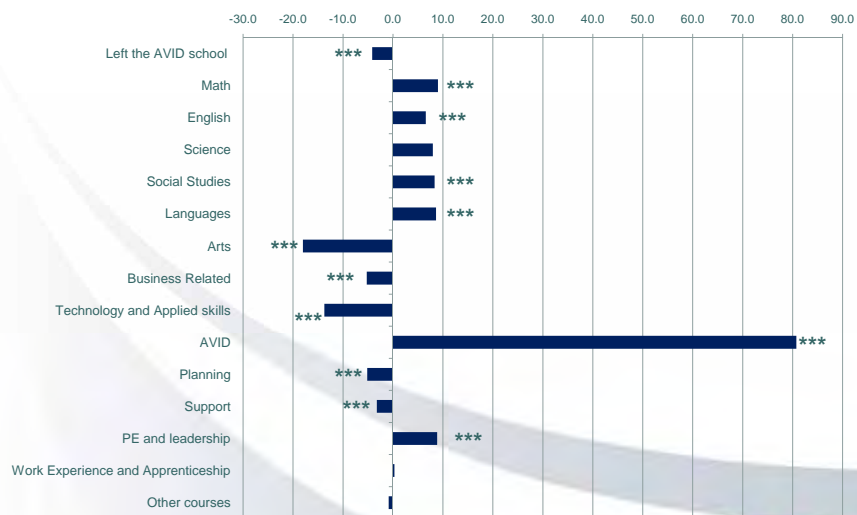
AVID program group more likely to experience multiple strategies and techniques

Frequent experience of 17 AVID strategies or techniques
(Grade 11 survey recall)



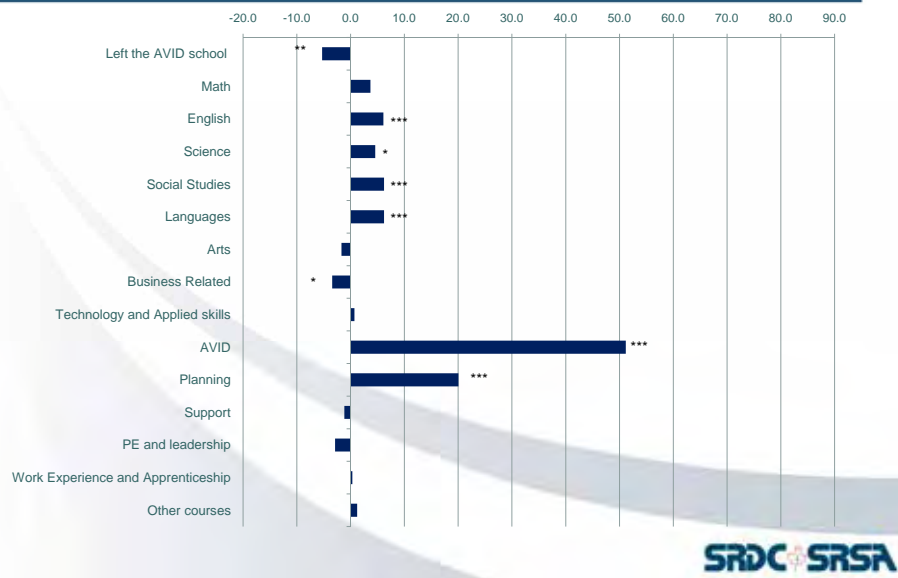
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In Grade 9, AVID displaced arts, technology and applied skills, increased “academic” subjects

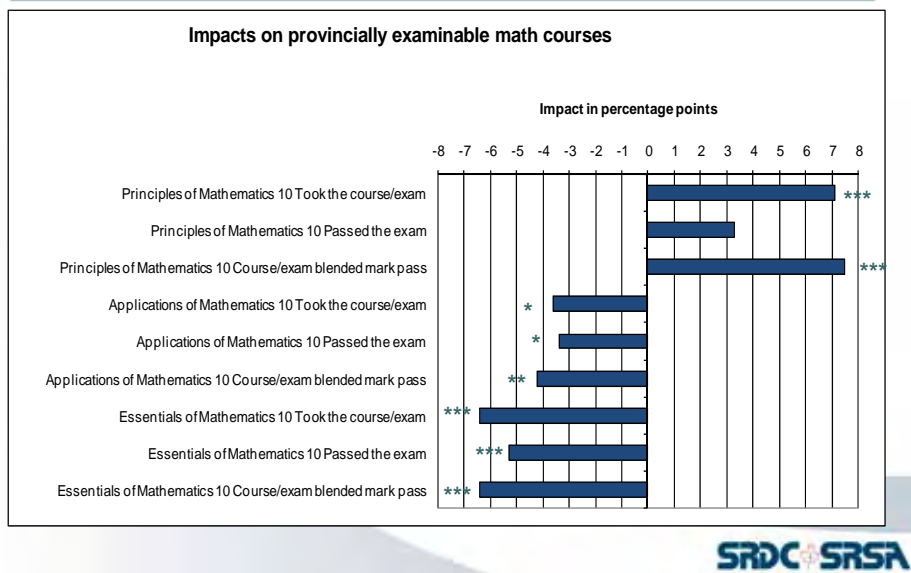


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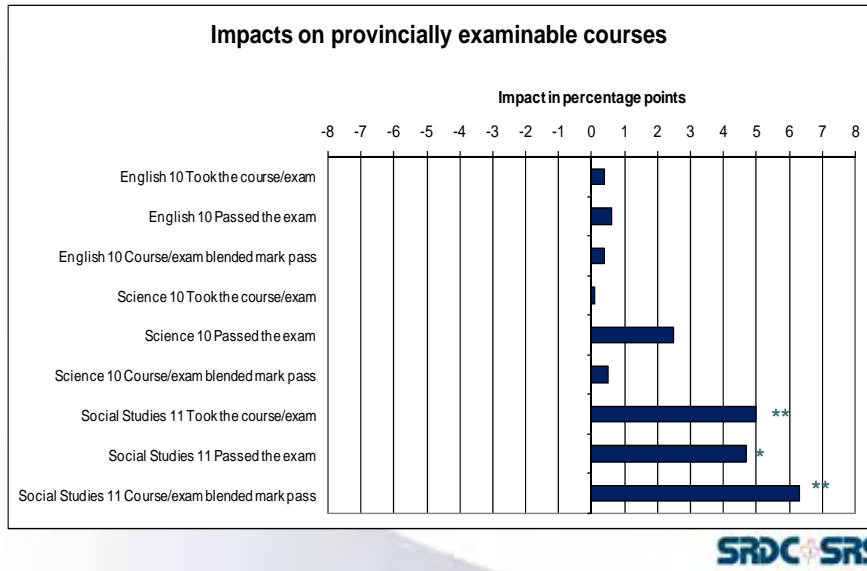
In Grade 11, AVID displaced business, PE and increased planning and “academic” subjects



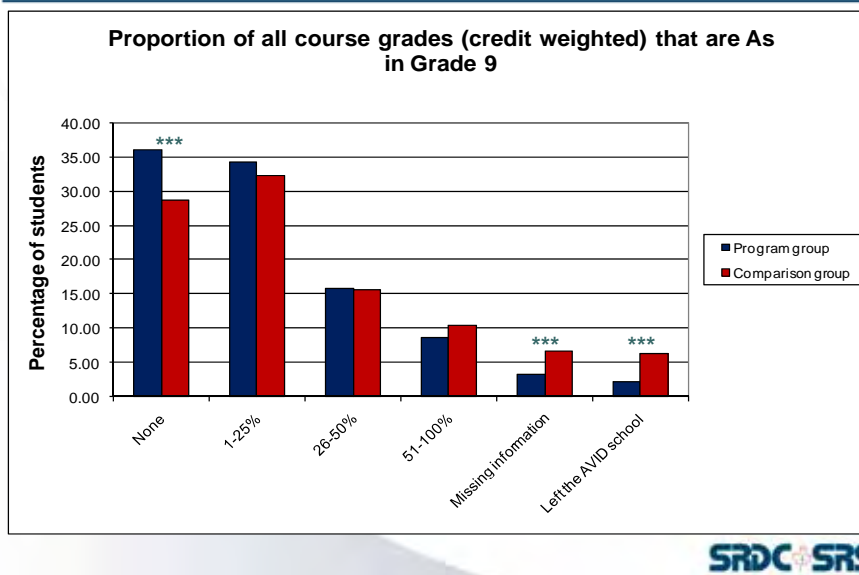
BC AVID offer had positive impacts on take up of the most rigorous of 3 Math course choices



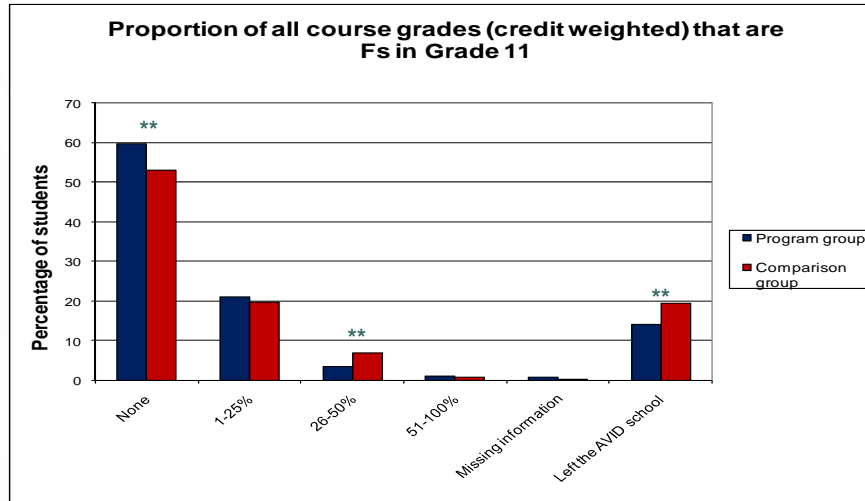
The offer increased take up and passing of Social Studies 11 – another university pre-requisite



In Grade 9, students got lower marks. BC AVID reduced the proportion obtaining A grades.



But by Grade 11, marks recovered. BC AVID reduced the proportion with failing grades.



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The BC AVID Pilot Project continues for a final report in late 2012

- Analyzing data about students' experience of BC AVID in Grade 12;
- Analyzing implementation of the four-year program against "fair test" expectations for BC AVID;
- Collecting and analyzing data on both cohorts' post-secondary experiences;
- Benefit-cost analysis;
- Making data sets publicly available for additional analysis;
- Supporting policy makers and practitioners to identify what works to improve outcomes for students.

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Thank you!

- More information:
 - www.srdc.org

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