



NEWS RELEASE

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Three BCPS representatives to serve as featured speakers at national college readiness institutes this summer

Towson, MD – A Baltimore County Public Schools senior, graduate, and administrator have been selected as featured speakers for the national 2022 AVID Summer Institutes. AVID, which stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination, is a college readiness system designed to prepare students for college readiness and success.

Each summer, AVID Center offers two and three-day professional learning institutes for AVID K-12 educators from across the nation. This year, summer learning institutes will be held in person and virtually in more than 10 US cities to support educators in building instructional and leadership strategies for student engagement and success.

“It is an immense honor to be selected by AVID Center to speak at a Summer Institute,” says Dr. Heather Wooldridge, coordinator in the BCPS Office of College and Career Readiness and AVID Co-District Director. “In the past 19 years, a total of only four BCPS representatives had been selected as speakers. We are ecstatic to have not one, not two, but three speakers in a single year! What a way to kick off the 20th anniversary of AVID in BCPS!”

The AVID Summer Institute in Orlando, Fla., will feature Towson High School senior Anoushka Carass as the student speaker. “Anoushka is a model AVID student,” said Kellie Alexander, Towson High AVID teacher. “Each year in AVID, she has fully immersed herself in the program and taken all the writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization, and reading strategies and made them her own. This passionate, helpful, and incredibly talented student is loved by all her classmates and AVID teachers. She is a student who truly represents what AVID is about.”

The AVID Path Plus Institute in Baltimore will feature BCPS AVID District Director Michael Barberesi as the educator speaker and Pikesville High School AVID graduate [Omer Reshid](#) as the student speaker. “Mr. Barberesi has always said that if AVID had been in his schools growing up, he definitely would have been recruited,” said Wooldridge. “He has a powerful story to share. And he is a passionate educator who is a talented rapper and a former DJ, so we cannot wait to hear him speak. We are certain he will put on an inspiring performance for all those attending the first ever AVID Path Plus held here in Baltimore.”

Reshid, who graduated from Pikesville High in 2020, is a former student member of the school board, a sophomore at The George Washington University, and a licensed real estate agent. The AVID Digital experiences will also feature Reshid.

BCPS began implementing AVID in fall 2002 with six AVID sites. There are currently AVID sites at 21 high schools, 24 middle schools, and 11 elementary schools. New Town High School and Pikesville High School are the only AVID National Demonstration High Schools in Maryland and, along with Dundalk Middle School, have been certified as AVID Schoolwide Sites of Distinction.

AVID is a nonprofit organization that assists schools in shifting to a more equitable, student-centered approach. AVID has trained more than 400,000 educators through its summer institutes. More than 7,500 schools across the world rely on AVID to serve almost 2 million students annually. According to the AVID website, “first generation, low-income AVID alumni who go to college are four times more likely to graduate than their national peers.”

(Editor’s note: Photos of Barberesi, Carass, and Reshid accompany this release.)

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[Baltimore County Public Schools](#), the nation’s 25th largest school system, is focused on raising the bar and closing gaps to prepare our students for the future. Thanks to innovative and talented leaders, teachers, staff, and students, BCPS celebrates [many honors](#).