



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

For Immediate Release

May 24, 2024

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Northwood student to speak at national AVID conference

Like any seventh-grader, or any adult, Cate Bigler sometimes doubted herself.

But negative inner voices are increasingly part of her past and less of her future, especially as she prepares to take the stage this summer to speak to more than 4,000 educators at the national AVID Summer Institute in San Diego this summer.

The Northwood Middle School soon-to-be eighth-grader wrote an essay in her AVID class that was selected as the winner among more than 150,000 students from across the country earning her a spot as a convention speaker.

Cate's NMS teacher Tucker Wilson explained that AVID is a class that helps students dig deeper and achieve higher in their current core academic classes and develop a plan for their future.

"We have weekly tutorials on what students are confused about in their classes and complete projects on colleges and careers," Wilson said.

In her essay, Cate explained what her first year of AVID has meant to her.

"I used to struggle with believing in myself and telling myself to just try. And most of that was because of how scared I was of being judged, by others and even more by myself. I've always wanted the best for others and for myself, but I used to let the fear take over and the worry about negative comments.

"Until I realized that the fear of judgment kept me from even trying. And that's what I appreciate about AVID – since I've been in AVID, my confidence has grown. A lot," Cate wrote.

The essay earned Cate and a parent an all-expenses-paid trip to the San Diego convention to be held June 10-12.. She's bringing her dad, John, a teacher in a neighboring school district. She also won a \$500 scholarship.

Wilson said he told Northwood Principal Bethany Hall that one day a student from Northwood would represent the school at an AVID event.

“Seeing the student speakers is the most exciting part of the convention. Ever since my first AVID summer institute in Tampa in 2019, it was my goal to have a student speaker represent D 200,” Wilson said.

Wilson said Cate is an excellent AVID student and will be an outstanding ambassador for Northwood and for Woodstock.

“Cate is a great choice because she is so smart and yet so coachable,” Wilson said. “She is deeply dedicated to her studies and listens well to feedback. She is very kind to all students, and it is great to see someone so talented who works so hard be showcased for her abilities.”