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**UPDATED RELEASE** with new details  
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## LPEF TO SUPPORT DISTRICT'S NEW COLLEGE-READINESS PROGRAM

Two major grants, plus added fundraising, allow the La Crosse Public Education Foundation to fund start-up costs for AVID – Advancement Via Individual Determination

LA CROSSE, WI (Aug. 20, 2014) – Students at La Crosse Central and Logan high schools will now have access to a college-readiness program with a strong track record of success in helping students of all levels – but particularly those in the academic middle – succeed in college.

The program is called AVID, Advancement Via Individual Determination. It will be implemented through a partnership between the School District of La Crosse and the La Crosse Public Education Foundation.

The foundation will make its largest-single gift to the district, expected to reach nearly \$200,000 over a three-year period.

The gift is made possible in large part due to receipt of the foundation's largest-ever grant, a \$125,000 three-year grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation of St. Paul, Minn.

A second major gift will jumpstart additional fundraising. The La Crosse Community Foundation announced Wednesday approval of a \$30,000 grant to support the project. With that grant and other fundraising, the La Crosse Public Education Foundation expects to cover the incremental start-up costs for AVID, including some intensive training for district staff. At the end of three years, the district will assume the ongoing costs as part of its normal budget.

*"This is another great example of a multitude of organizations coming together for the benefit of our students," shares Superintendent of Schools Randy Nelson. "With our ever tightening budgets it is great when we can partner with organizations like the Bremer Foundation, the La Crosse Community Foundation and the La Crosse Public Education Foundation. It is partnerships like this that show we are truly a community that supports our schools and families."*

AVID-trained educators teach skills that help students succeed in college: specific reading, writing and note-taking skills, an emphasis on inquiry and key collaboration and leadership skills. They are enrolled in the AVID Elective class and also are required to take one honors or advanced placement class.

The goal is to help all students reach their full potential. In that way, AVID complements the La Crosse Promise Future Centers, which are starting a third year providing students help with career and college exploration, along with assistance in applying to colleges and seeking financial aid. The Future Centers help students get into college. AVID helps them prepare to succeed.

*“We are excited about the opportunity to give our students more tools to ensure their post high school success,” said Central High School Principal Jeff Fleig. “We want every student that desires a four-year degree to have the skills and confidence to make that a reality. The AVID program is a great addition to the programs and services we offer to ensure our students’ success.”*

Students in the AVID program nationally complete courses required for college admission at a rate that is more than double that for other students. In a 2012-13 study, 93 percent of AVID program seniors completed college entrance requirements and 76 percent had been accepted at a four-year college. And AVID students stay in college once they enroll – 89 percent of those who started were still in college two years later. (Source: <http://www.avid.org/>)

That track record of success, and the focus on raising the academic achievement of the majority of students in the middle, was key to the grant application to the Otto Bremer Foundation.

*“Education is a keystone in the development of healthy communities,” said Brian Lipschultz, co-CEO and Trustee of the Otto Bremer Foundation. “La Crosse’s schools are striving to create enhanced opportunities for their scholars, and we hope our support for the start-up of this program will benefit the community for years to come.”*

In addition to the Bremer and La Crosse Community Foundation grants, the La Crosse Public Education Foundation Board has pledged additional support for AVID and will be seeking added partners.

*“We think AVID is a game-changer for our children, our schools and our community,” said David Stoeffler, executive director of the education foundation. “With help from AVID, students will be better prepared for college and better able to compete in the knowledge economy. Our investment today is a down-payment to help future generations in La Crosse have an equal opportunity at the American Dream.”*

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**For more information about the School District of La Crosse, visit:** <http://lacrosseschools.org>

**About the Otto Bremer Foundation** <http://www.ottobremer.org/>

Created in 1944, the Otto Bremer Foundation assists people in achieving full economic, civic and social participation in and for the betterment of their communities. This mission is based on the intent of founder Otto Bremer. His vision and longstanding commitment to communities during and after the Great Depression are carried forward today through the Foundation's work in the places that are homes and neighbors to Bremer banks. The Foundation strives to help build healthy, vibrant communities—communities where basic needs are met, mutual regard is prized and opportunities for economic, civic and social participation are within everyone's reach.

The Otto Bremer Foundation owns 92 percent of Bremer Bank, and receives an equivalent share of the bank profits that are paid out as dividends. This means that a large portion of bank profit is invested back in local communities through grants and program-related investments. In 2013 the Foundation provided approximately \$38 million in grants and program-related investments.

Locally, Bremer Bank recently opened its branch office at 2570 Midwest Drive in Onalaska.

**About the La Crosse Community Foundation, visit:** <http://www.laxcommfoundation.com/>

Since the La Crosse Community Foundation was established in 1930, its endowment has awarded over \$21.5 million in total scholarships and grants. Community based support is vital to the Foundation mission to serve people and agencies that improve the quality of life for all La Crosse area residents.

**About the La Crosse Public Education Foundation** <http://lacrosseeducationfoundation.org/>

The La Crosse Public Education Foundation's mission is to enhance learning opportunities for students in the School District of La Crosse and to promote community understanding and support for public education. In the 2013-14 school year, the foundation provided more than \$43,000 in grants to district teachers and schools, plus provided nearly \$22,000 to help students overcome roadblocks to achievement in areas such as nutrition, transportation, academic and co-curricular support.

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