

MEMORANDUM

October 21, 2016

TO: Wanda Thomas
Senior Manager, Federal and State Compliance

FROM: Carla J. Stevens
Assistant Superintendent, Research and Accountability

SUBJECT: **OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM, 2015–2016**

Attached is the 2015–2016 Optional and Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) report. The program offers opportunities for students to make progress toward completing high school if they are unable to attend school in a traditional setting or are at risk of dropping out of school. OFSDP students may attend school on fixed or flexible schedules to include extended day, night, or weekend classes which are offered throughout the year through on-line and in-person services. The program began in November 2009 and provides students with opportunities to earn attendance and course credits needed to graduate from high school. The report describes characteristics of program participants and their academic outcomes for 2015–2016.

Key findings are as follows:

- In 2015–2016, 468 HISD students participated in OFSDP, the lowest enrollment since the first full year of program implementation in 2011–2012. This was a 23.2 percent decrease from 609 participants in 2011–2012, as well as a 14.9 percent decrease from 550 participants in 2014–2015.
- OFSDP participants enrolled in 1,453 courses, completed 79.1 percent of the courses, and earned 479.0 credits.
- In 2015–2016, 63 (25.0 percent) of the 252 OFSDP seniors graduated and 33 (13.1 percent) withdrew from HISD schools. By fall of the 2016–2017 school year, 74 (29.4 percent) remained enrolled in the district and 82 (32.5 percent) of OFSDP's 2015–2016 seniors had not yet shown up to continue their education in HISD.

Administrative Response

HISD provides many opportunities for students to be successful in non-traditional settings. One such opportunity is the implementation of the Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) program, primarily, at two of HISD's non-traditional High Schools; Advanced Virtual Academy (AVA) and Liberty HS. The program provides flexible hours and days of attendance for students in any grade who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.

Goals of the program:

1. To target those students who are unable to attend school in a traditional setting.
2. To offer students who are at risk of being denied credit for classes because of failure to meet attendance requirements the opportunity to recover that credit.

The OFSDP 2015-16 program has proven successful with an increase in percentage of 12th grade students that graduated from the program (25.0%) compared to (8.9%) in 2014-15 and a decrease in percentage of 12th grade students that have withdrawn (13.1%) compared to (14.2%) in 2014-15. This decrease is a direct result of a collaborative effort between OFSDP schools and the District Drop

Out Prevention Department. Schools implemented weekly graduation support meetings where all lead teachers from each OFSDP site identified potential drop outs and developed intervention strategies. An advocacy program, Scholar Centric, was implemented to provide support and mentoring to students who are at risk of dropping out. The program was based on the individual needs of the students and teachers provided guidance on academic performance and improvement. Teachers continued to engage with their students through social media and other forms of communication and outreach. Weekly visits were conducted at home, at job sites, and within the community to ensure that students stayed on track and that other students were recovered. The district provided additional support to these schools with strategic drop-out prevention initiatives such as:

1. Districtwide-Grads Within Reach Walk
2. Promotion of Youth Watch on each school campus
3. TAKS/STAAR tutoring

Success of this program cannot be measured and quantified in numbers alone. This program provides students with a second opportunity to be successful when all other efforts have failed.

Further distribution of this report is at your discretion. Should you have any further questions, please contact me at 713-556-6700.

 CJS

CJS:njk

Attachment

cc: Mark Smith
Grenita Lathan
Susan Kaler
Beatrice Marquez
Clarissa Giddings



RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM (OFSDP)
2015 - 2016

HISD

Research and Accountability

ANALYZING DATA, MEASURING PERFORMANCE.



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4400 West 18th Street Houston, Texas 77092-8501

www.HoustonISD.org

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OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM (OFSDP) 2015–2016

Introduction

The Optional Flexible School Day Program (OFSDP) is approved by the Texas Commissioner of Education and is offered by the Houston Independent School District (HISD) to provide students with flexible school hours and days of attendance. Students in any grade who meet one or more of the following criteria are eligible to participate under Texas Education Code (TEC) §29.0822:

- The student has dropped out of school or is at risk of dropping out of school, as defined by TEC, §29.081.
- The student participates in an approved early college high school plan.
- The student attends a campus implementing an innovative redesign under a plan approved by the commissioner of education.
- The student will be denied credit for one or more classes in which the student has been enrolled as a result of attendance requirements under the Texas Education Code, §25.092.

The goal of the program is to improve the graduation rates for students who are in danger of dropping out of school or who have dropped out, or for students who are behind in core subject courses. The program provides students with opportunities to earn attendance and course credits if they are unable to attend school in a traditional setting or are at risk of being denied course credit due to unmet attendance requirements. To meet their individualized needs, OFSDP participants may receive instruction and earn time for their attendance through the OFSDP or the regular school program, alternately. OFSDP students may attend school on fixed or flexible schedules to include extended day, night, or weekend classes which are offered throughout the year for original course credit or credit recovery. Average daily attendance (ADA) funding is provided through OFSDP for students who would otherwise not be eligible for funding because they attend school for less than a minimum of two hours per day, five days a week.

Participation in the program was approved by the HISD Board of Education on November 12, 2009, with an effective date of November 13, 2009. The program directly supports HISD's Primary Goal 1: Increase Student Achievement. The Commissioner of Education's approval for program continuation is contingent upon the demonstrated success of the program in HISD. This report provides data regarding the program's success.

Methods

Data Collection and Analysis

- The 2015–2016 OFSDP participants and their campuses were identified by the district's office of Federal and State Compliance. Identified participants included 468 of the 469 students that were listed in HISD's 2015–2016 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Flexible Attendance Data Report obtained from the Texas Education Agency. All records associated with the excluded student show the student's status as withdrawn with no academic activity during 2015–2016.

- Additional data sources for this report included OFSDP program enrollment for 2011–2012 through 2015–2016, 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 participants’ demographics, and 2015–2016 participants’ course enrollment and completion, credits earned, attendance, and status (enrolled, entry, exit/withdrawal, and graduation) records. Student-level data were extracted from HISD’s PEIMS, Chancery Student Information System (Chancery) Ad Hoc, Chancery Historical Grade Records 2016–2017 (for the 2015–2016 Regular and Summer School terms), 400-Basic Attendance Record, and PEIMS EDIT+ Reports Data Review - Flex Attendance databases.
- Courses designated as English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and economics (Free Enterprise System) in the “Generic Subject Area” field of the Chancery Historical Grade Records for the 2015–2016 Regular and Summer School terms were categorized as core content courses. The remaining courses were categorized as “other.” Course enrollment was determined by the total number of courses listed for OFSDP students. The course completion rate was determined by the number of courses for which OFSDP students earned course credit (by achieving an average course grade of 70.0 or better and by not exceeding the course absence limit of 10 percent of the days scheduled for the course) divided by the number of courses in which OFSDP students were enrolled. Course credit earned was determined by the total course credits received by OFSDP students for the courses in which they were enrolled.
- The average daily attendance (ADA) rate for OFSDP students in the 500 Record was extracted from the PEIMS EDIT+ Reports Data Review - Flex Attendance. The ADA for OFSDP students who also utilized the regular school program and were in the 400 Record was calculated using the standard Student Attendance Formula.
- One OFSDP student from Liberty High School and one from Sterling High School, along with 84 Advanced Virtual Academy (AVA) students had attendance recorded in the 400-Basic Attendance Record as well as in the 500 Record.
- Results for the OFSDP 2014–2015 school year were obtained from the previous year’s report (Department of Research and Accountability, December 2015).

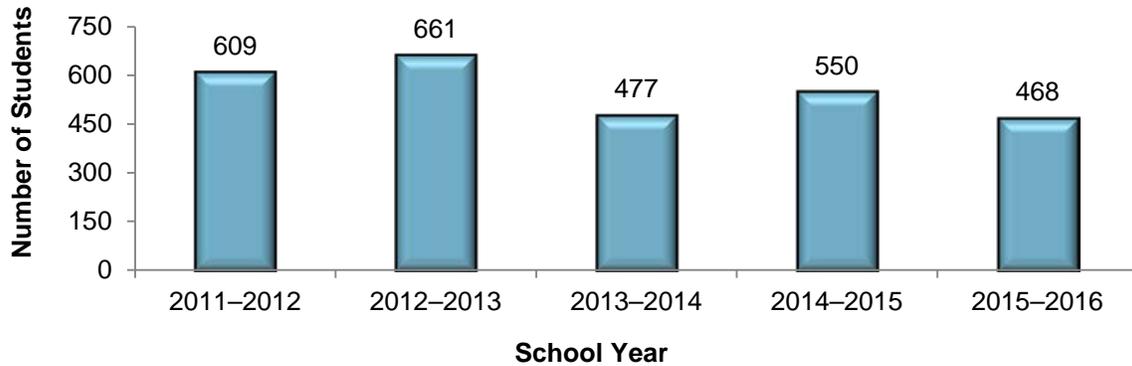
Data Limitations

- Due to the static format of HISD’s 2015–2016 Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Flexible Attendance Data Report as obtained from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), only students’ local identification and campus numbers were extracted from these data and linked to other district data files. This created the potential for inconsistencies between the source data from TEA and the district data used for this report.

Results

- During 2015–2016, 468 HISD students participated in OFSDP, the lowest enrollment since 2011–2012, the first full year of program implementation. This was a 23.2 percent decrease from 609 participants in 2011–2012, as well as a 14.9 percent decrease from 550 participants in 2014–2015 (**Figure 1**, page 3).

Figure 1. Optional Flexible School Day Program enrollment, 2011–2012 through 2015–2016



Sources: Department of Research and Accountability, (PEIMS) Flexible Attendance Data Report (December 2015); HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report.

- More than 97 percent of all 468 OFSDP participants (unduplicated) attended the Advanced Virtual Academy (AVA/Twilight High School) (456 or 97.4 percent). Another eight students attended Liberty High School (1.7 percent), one student each attended Austin High School and Yates High School (0.2 percent each), and two students attended Sterling High School (0.4 percent).
- **Table 1** presents the proportions of OFSDP program participants by race/ethnicity and school and the proportions of students in grades 9–12 across the district by race/ethnicity. Among OFSDP participants, 66.7 percent were Hispanic, 29.5 percent were African American, 3.2 percent were White, 0.4 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.2 percent were two or more races, and none were Native American students.
- When compared to students across the district, African American and Hispanic students were over-represented among OFSDP’s participants by 4.5, and 7.1 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and White students in addition to students of two or more races were underrepresented among OFSDP participants by 3.5, 0.3, 7.1, and 0.7 percentage points, respectively.

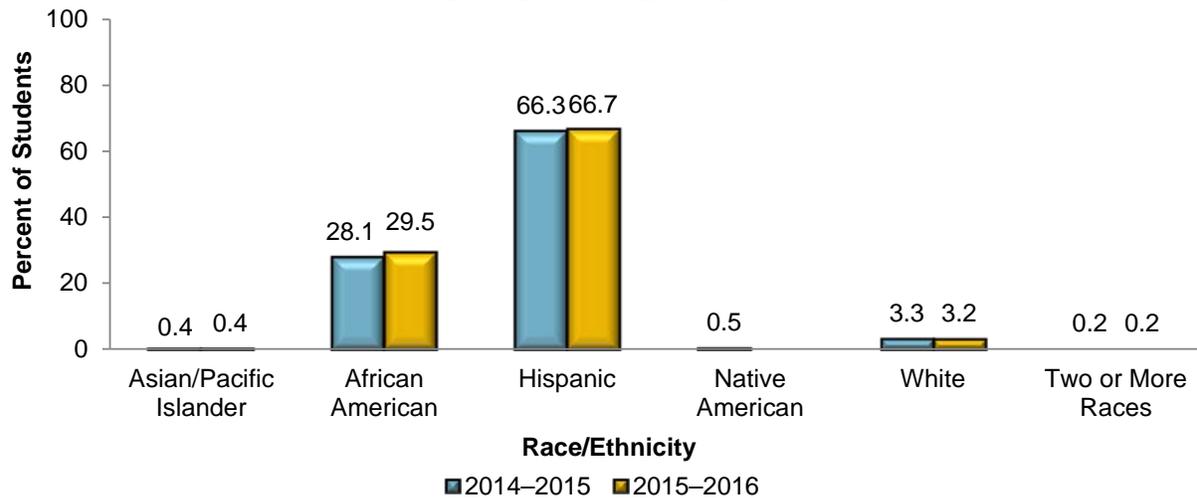
Table 1. Number and Percentage of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by School and Race/Ethnicity and HISD Grades 9–12 Students by Race/Ethnicity, 2015–2016

School	Asian/Pacific Islander		African American		Hispanic		Native American		White		Two or More Races		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
AVA	2	0.4	135	29.6	303	66.4	-	-	15	3.3	1	0.2	456
Austin	-	-	-	-	1	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Liberty	-	-	1	12.5	7	87.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
Sterling	-	-	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Yates	-	-	1	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total OFSDP	2	0.4	138	29.5	312	66.7	-	-	15	3.2	1	0.2	468
HISD (Grades 9–12)	2,027	3.9	13,162	25.0	31,341	59.6	151	0.3	5,414	10.3	449	0.9	52,544

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery, September 2, 2016; PEIMS 2015–2016. Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- **Figure 2** presents comparative data on the proportions of the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 OFSDP students by race/ethnicity. In both years, more than 94 percent of the students were Hispanic or African American, while 84–85 percent of the district’s students were Hispanic or African American (Table 1, page 3; Department of Research and Accountability, December 2015).
- From 2014–2015 to 2015–2016, there was no change in the proportions of OFSDP Asian/Pacific Islander (0.4 percent) students and students of two or more races (0.2 percent). There were decreases in the proportions of Native American and White students (0.5 percentage point and 0.1 percentage points, respectively). In contrast, there were small increases in the proportions of Hispanic (0.4 percentage points) and African American students (1.4 percentage points) in OFSDP (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Percentage of Optional Flexible School Day Program participants by race/ethnicity, 2014–2015 and 2015–2016



Sources: Department of Research and Accountability, Optional Flexible School Day Program Report (December 2015); Chancery, September 2, 2016; PEIMS 2015–2016.

Note: OFSDP in 2014–2015: Asian/Pacific Islander (n=2), African American (n=153 unduplicated), Hispanic (n=366), Native American (n=3), White (n=18), and Two or more races (n=1); Total (n=550).

- **Table 2** (page 5) presents the number and percentage of economically disadvantaged students in grades 9–12 across the district and in the OFSDP by school. Overall, economically disadvantaged OFSDP participants (65.0 percent) were underrepresented by 5.3 percentage points when compared to students in grades 9–12 across the district (70.3 percent).
- **Table 3** (page 5) displays the distribution of 2015–2016 OFSDP participants by grade level and age. Participants’ ages ranged from 16 to 25, with a modal age of 18, followed by age 19 and 17. A total of 72.6 percent of the students were between the ages of 16 and 19. Another 12.8 percent of the students were 20 or 21 years of age and 14.5 percent of participants were over 21 years of age.

Table 2. Number and Percentage of Economically Disadvantaged HISD Students in Grade 9–12 and Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by School, 2015–2016

School	Participants		Economically Disadvantaged	
	N		N	%
Advanced Virtual Academy	456		297	65.1
Austin	1		0	-
Liberty	8		5	62.5
Sterling	2		1	50.0
Yates	1		1	100.0
Total OFSDP	468		304	65.0
HISD Grades 9–12	52,544		36,938	70.3

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery, September 2, 2016; PEIMS 2015–2016

- The largest proportion of participants was 12th-graders (53.8 percent), followed by 40.8 percent 11th-graders, 4.5 percent 10th-graders, and 0.9 percent 9th-graders (Table 3).

Table 3. Number and Percentage of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by Age* and Grade Level, 2015–2016

Grade	Age										N	%
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25		
9	-	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	0.9
10	-	6	6	5	2	-	2	-	-	-	21	4.5
11	9	46	57	35	8	13	10	9	4	-	191	40.8
12	3	39	78	52	26	11	23	9	5	6	252	53.8
Total (N)	12	92	143	93	36	24	35	18	9	6	468	100.0
Total (%)	2.6	19.7	30.6	19.9	7.7	5.1	7.5	3.8	1.9	1.3		100.1

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery, September 2, 2016; PEIMS 2015–2016. Note: *Age as of September 1, 2015; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- In contrast with the overall district’s grade 9–12 student demographics, the proportion of female OFSDP participants was 3.0 percentage points larger than its proportion of male participants. This compared to a smaller gender difference of 0.8 percentage point across the district, with fewer female students (49.6 percent) than male students (50.4 students) (Table 4).

Table 4. Number and Percentage of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by Gender and School and HISD Grade 9–12 Students by Gender, 2015–2016

School	Female		Male		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Advanced Virtual Academy	233	51.1	223	48.9	456
Austin	1	100.0	-	-	1
Liberty	5	62.5	3	37.5	8
Sterling	1	50.0	1	50.0	2
Yates	1	100.0	-	-	1
Total	241	51.5	227	48.5	468
HISD Grades 9–12	26,086	49.6	26,458	50.4	52,544

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery, September 2, 2016; PEIMS 2015–2016. Note: *Age as of September 1, 2015.

- Based on fall 2016–2017 enrollment data available for 2015–2016 OFSDP students, **Table 5** shows the enrollment status of 468 OFSDP participants by school. A total of 13.7 percent of the students had graduated from an HISD high school and 16.5 percent of the students had withdrawn from HISD schools, while 38.9 percent of the 2015–2016 OFSDP students remained enrolled in HISD, but had not shown up to attend school and the remaining 31.0 percent of the 2015–2016 OFSDP students were still enrolled in the district for the 2016–2017 school year.

Table 5. Fall 2016–2017 Enrollment Statuses of 2015–2016 Optional Flexible School Day Program Students

School	Graduated*	Withdrawn	Enrolled		Total
			-No Show	Enrolled	
Advanced Virtual Academy	59	73	180	144	456
Austin	-	1	-	-	1
Liberty	5	1	1	1	8
Sterling	-	1	1	-	2
Yates	-	1	-	-	1
Total (Number)	64	77	182	145	468
Total (Percent)	13.7	16.5	38.9	31.0	100.1

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery Ad Hoc, September 7, 2016

Note: Results based on Status and latest Entry Date, Exit (Withdrawal) Date, and Exit (Withdrawal) Status.

*Graduated between September 2015 and August 2016; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- Table 6** presents data on the enrollment status for the 252 twelfth-grade OFSDP participants by school. Sixty-three or 25.0 percent of the seniors had graduated from an HISD high school. Another 33 or 13.1 percent of the seniors had withdrawn from HISD schools, 82 or 32.5 percent of participating seniors were still enrolled in the district, but had not shown up to attend school, and 74 seniors (29.4 percent) remained enrolled in HISD for the 2016–2017 school year.

Table 6. Fall 2016–2017 Enrollment Statuses of 2015–2016 Twelfth-Grade Optional Flexible School Day Program Students

School	Graduated*	Withdrawn	Enrolled		Total
			-No Show	Enrolled	
Advanced Virtual Academy	58	30	81	73	242
Austin	-	1	-	-	1
Liberty	5	1	1	1	8
Yates	-	1	-	-	1
Total (Number)	63	33	82	74	252
Total (Percent)	25.0	13.1	32.5	29.4	100.0

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery Ad Hoc, September 7, 2016

Note: Results based on Status and latest Entry Date, Exit (Withdrawal) Date, and Exit (Withdrawal) Status.

*Graduated between September 2015 and August 2016; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- The results presented in Tables 5 and 6 indicate all except one (98.4 percent) of the 64 OFSDP graduates (n=63) were seniors, 42.9 percent of the 77 OFSDP students who withdrew from district schools were seniors (n=33), 45.1 percent of the 182 students who enrolled, but did not show up to attend school in 2016–2017 were seniors (n=82), and 50.0 percent of the OFSDP students who remained enrolled in the district for the 2016–2017 school year (n=145) were seniors (n=74).

- **Table 7** shows the 2015–2016 OFSDP participants’ 2016–2017 enrollment, withdrawal, and graduation statuses by grade. Twenty-five percent of the OFSDP seniors graduated along with one 11th-grade student (0.5 percent). The smallest proportion of participants to withdraw from the district or to not show up for school in 2016–2017 was comprised of seniors (45.6 percent), with proportions increasing successively from 11th- (66.0 percent) to 9th-graders (100.0 percent). Seniors also represented the smallest group of participants to remain enrolled in the district (29.4 percent), with higher proportions among 10th- (33.5 percent) and 11th-graders (33.3 percent) in 2016–2017.

Table 7. Fall 2016–2017 Enrollment Statuses of 2015–2016 Optional Flexible School Day Students

Grade	Base Enrollment	Number Graduated	% Graduated	Number Withdrawn /No Show	% Withdrawn /No Show	Number Enrolled	% Enrolled
9	4	-	-	4	100.0	-	-
10	21	-	-	14	66.7	7	33.3
11	191	1	0.5	126	66.0	64	33.5
12	252	63	25.0	115	45.6	74	29.4
Total	468	64	13.7	259	55.3	145	31.0

Sources: HISD’s 2015–2016 PEIMS Flexible Attendance Data Report; Chancery Ad Hoc, September 7, 2016

Note: Results based on Status and latest Entry Date, Exit (Withdrawal) Date, and Exit (Withdrawal) Status.

Students graduated between September 2015 and August 2016; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- The total refined 2015–2016 average daily attendance rate for OFSDP participants reported in the PEIMS EDIT+ Reports Data Review for the 500-Flexible Attendance Data Record (for students who attended school less than two hours per day, five days a week) was 74.1 percent.
- Of the 468 OFSDP students in 2015–2016, a total of 86 (18.4 percent) also participated in the regular school program (i.e., their attendance was recorded in the 400-Basic Attendance Record). These students had an average daily attendance rate of 77.1 percent.
- **Table 8** (page 8) presents data on OFSDP course enrollment, course completion, and the credits earned by OFSDP participants. Overall, 254 participants enrolled in 1,453 courses during the 2015–2016 fall, spring, and summer semesters. Students successfully completed 1,149 or 79.1 percent of these courses and earned 479.0 credits. Core course enrollment accounted for 1,087 or 74.8 percent of the total course enrollments and 373.0 or 77.9 percent of the total credits earned. Other, non-core course enrollment comprised 366 or 25.2 percent of the total course enrollments and 106.0 or 22.3 percent of the total credits earned.

Table 8. Optional Flexible School Day Program Course Enrollment, Course Completion, and Credits Earned, 2015–2016

School	Core Courses			Other Courses			OFSDP Total		
	Enrolled	Completed (%)	Credits Earned	Enrolled	Completed (%)	Credits Earned	Enrolled	Completed (%)	Credits Earned
AVA	1,056	856 (81.1%)	365.5	360	256 (39.6%)	104.0	1,416	1,112 (44.1%)	469.5
Austin	-	-	-	3	3 (100%)	1.5	3	3 (100%)	1.5
Liberty	17	17 (100.0%)	5.0	2	2 (100.0%)	0.5	19	19 (100.0%)	5.5
Sterling	14	14 (100.0%)	2.5	1	1 (100.0%)	0	15	15 (100.0%)	2.5
Total	1,087	887 (81.6%)	373.0	366	262 (71.6%)	106.0	1,453	1,149 (79.1%)	479.0

Sources: Historical Grades Records, August 18, 2016 and September 2, 2016.

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

Discussion

The results of this report provide information regarding OFSDP’s accomplishments in providing an alternative school program for students who are at risk of not graduating from high school. Program participation, course completion, and graduation outcomes presented in this report are indicative of OFSDP’s support of HISD’s Core Initiative 3, which addresses equity in students’ access to high-quality educational programs and instruction, and closing performance gaps between Asian/Pacific Islander and White students relative to African American and Hispanic students.

There was a 14.9 percent decrease in program enrollment from 2014–2015 to 2015–2016. The proportion of African American participants in OFSDP increased 1.4 percentage points and its proportion of Hispanic participants increased 0.4 percentage points. In 2014–2015 and 2015–2016, these, typically, underserved populations were overrepresented among OFSDP participants when compared to HISD’s overall student demographics. In both years, the program was comprised of more than 94 percent of African American and Hispanic students, which afforded them unique academic opportunities to advance their academic accomplishments through their participation in OFSDP. Though there was a 5.3 percentage point difference between the proportions of economically disadvantaged students who participated in the OFSDP program and the district’s proportion of economically disadvantaged students (65.0 percent versus 70.3 percent, respectively), the program primarily supported economically disadvantaged students who are typically at risk for dropping out of school.

The program also served overage students, with more than one-fourth of OFSDP’s 2015–2016 participants between the ages of 20 and 25 years (n=128 or 27.4 percent). OFSDP’s flexible scheduling for overage students supports the aforementioned District Initiative as well as provides an important service to the Houston community. Efforts made to enlist the participation of African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, at-risk, overage, and other eligible students should be enhanced and replicated across the district.

OFSDP participants' average Flexible Attendance rate was 74.1 in 2015–2016, which was more than two times higher than the corresponding rate for OFSDP participants in 2014–2015 (36.2 percent). It seems reasonable to conclude that OFSDP participants' improved attendance may have played an important role in the improved course completion and graduation rates for OFSDP participants from 2014–2015 to 2015–2016. Specifically, in 2015–2016, participants enrolled in 1,453 courses during the 2015–2016 fall, spring, and summer semesters and successfully completed 1,149 or 79.1 percent of these courses (versus 43.9 percent completed in 2014–2015), earning 479.0 credits. Core course enrollment in 2015–2016 accounted for 74.8 percent of the total course enrollments and 77.9 percent of the total credits earned. In 2015–2016, OFSDP seniors achieved their goal to graduate at a much higher rate (25.0 percent) than in 2014–2015 (8.9 percent).

Program-wide, enrollment trends were fairly consistent across grade levels, except for the small group of 9th-graders (n=4), of whom, three completed coursework during 2015–2016; but had a withdrawn or no show status by early 2016–2017. Withdrawal and no show trends for 2015–2016 OFSDP 10th- and 11th-graders were less favorable than for OFSDP 12th-graders. However, 10th- and 11th-graders remained enrolled at higher rates (33.3–33.5 percent) than 12th-graders (29.4 percent), even considering the number of 12th-grade graduates. Overall, unfortunately, the largest proportion of 2015–2016 OFSDP students had withdrawn from district schools or remained enrolled for the 2016–2017 school year, but did not attend a school in the district (55.1 percent). The second largest group of 2015–2016 students has remained enrolled in district schools (31.1 percent). An opposite pattern was evident in 2014–2015. To further support student retention and increase the number of OFSDP participants who enroll in and who complete coursework and graduate, it may prove helpful to assess and address factors that impact participants' decisions to discontinue their education with the district, particularly, after their involvement in the program.

In light of the special needs of OFSDP students, the results of this report are generally favorable and show some important gains when compared to 2014–2015 OFSDP student outcomes, despite the almost 15 percent decline in program enrollment since 2014–2015 and the lowest, full-year enrollment in the program's history. The 2015–2016 OFSDP offered a malleable opportunity for dropouts and current HISD students to advance toward high school completion, especially for those who are among the underserved populations in our communities and those who had exhausted all other avenues toward academic success. Given the decline in program enrollment in recent years, it may be helpful to further ensure that all HISD high schools heighten the profile of OFSDP's unique opportunities for eligible students to participate in this program, particularly at schools serving large proportions of economically disadvantaged and other traditionally underserved students who are or who may be at risk of dropping out of school.

References

- Department of Research and Accountability. (December 2015). Houston Independent School District Optional Flexible School Day Program 2013–2014. Houston, TX: Houston Independent School District. Retrieved from http://www.houstonisd.org/cms/lib2/TX01001591/Centricity/domain/8269/pe_districtprograms/OFSDP%202014-2015.pdf
- Texas Education Agency. (October 2015). Graduation Credit Requirements for Students Entering Ninth Grade Beginning in 2012–2013. Retrieved from <http://tea.texas.gov/graduation.aspx>