

# Twilight Credit Recovery Program Annual Report, 2018–2019

Twilight is a credit recovery program offered by Austin Independent School District (AISD) to struggling students to meet the varying needs of students across the district. In 2018–2019, the program was available in middle and high schools. High school students who enrolled in Twilight courses had the opportunity to recover semester credits and/or attendance. Middle school students had the opportunity to recover grades for a 6-week grading period, a grade for the full school year, and/or attendance. Twilight primarily assisted students who were at risk of dropping out by offering credit recovery through curricula aligned with Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) using online platforms and teacher-led courses.

This report includes findings regarding demographic characteristics and academic outcomes of students served; highlights emerging topics from the student, teacher, and program staff surveys; and provides general recommendations for future program implementation.

## Twilight Participants

According to program records and AISD student enrollment records, 2,859 students enrolled in Twilight in 2018–2019, corresponding to 8% of the AISD middle and high school student body ( $N=36,823$ ). Fifty-one percent of these students ( $n=1,455$ ) were high school students from 16 high schools: Akins, Anderson, Austin, Austin State Hospital, Bowie, Burnet, Crockett, Eastside, Garza, Lindon B. Johnson, Lanier, McCallum, Phoenix Academy, Reagan, Ann Richards, and Travis. Forty-nine percent ( $n=1,404$ ) were middle school students from 17 campuses: Bailey, Bedichek, Burnet, Covington, Dobie, Fulmore, Garcia, Gorzycki, Kealing, Lamar, Martin, Murchison, O. Henry, Paredes, Sadler Means, Small, and Webb. The program served a larger number of high school students than middle school students. The largest group in middle school was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (19%), whereas the largest group in high school was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (17%). In addition, the majority of the Twilight students were Hispanic (71%), economically disadvantaged (71%), and/or categorized as being at risk of dropping out of school (77%). Lastly, 30% were English learners, and 13% were receiving special education services (Table 1). Notably, AISD's student body as a whole had lower percentages of economically disadvantaged (53%) and at-risk (49%) students in 2018–2019 than did the group enrolled in Twilight, indicating the program successfully targeted and served students in most need of support.

**Table 1.**  
**A total of 2,859 middle and high school students participated in the Twilight credit recovery program.**

	Overall					
	<i>n</i> count	% total	<i>n</i> count	% total	<i>n</i> count	% total
Grade 6	434	15%				
Grade 7	426	15%				
Grade 8	544	19%				
Grade 9	288	10%				
Grade 10	314	11%				
Grade 11	355	12%				
Grade 12	498	17%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,859</b>					
	Overall		Middle school		High school	
	<i>n</i> count	% total	<i>n</i> count	% total	<i>n</i> count	% total
Hispanic	2,043	71%	1,069	76%	974	67%
African American/Black	263	9%	120	9%	143	10%
Asian	49	2%	19	1%	30	2%
White	430	15%	165	12%	265	18%
Two or more races/other	72	2%	30	2%	42	3%
At risk	2,196	77%	1,095	78%	1,101	76%
Economically disadvantaged	2,023	71%	1,126	80%	897	62%
English learners	869	30%	575	41%	294	20%
Special education	381	13%	201	14%	180	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,817</b>		<b>1,404</b>		<b>1,455</b>	

*Source.* 2018–2019 Twilight program data and AISD student enrollment records

## Middle School Outcomes

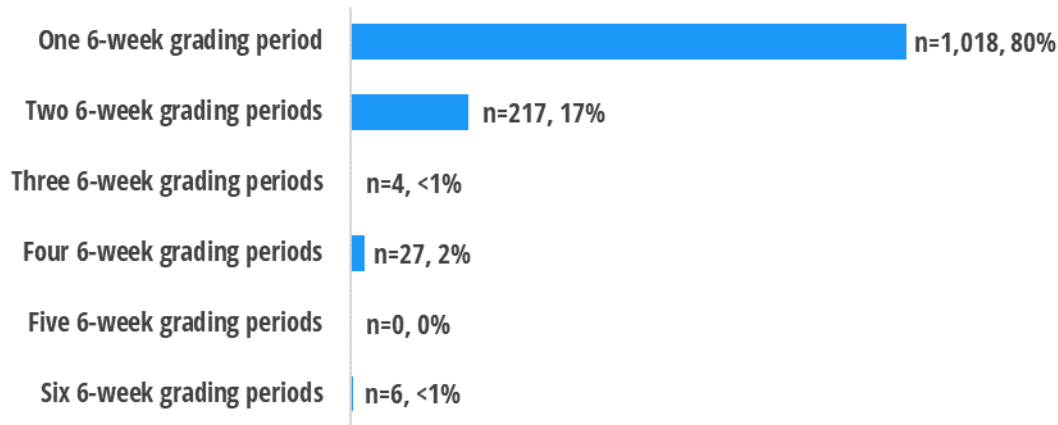
The Twilight program assisted many middle school students in recovering grades and attendance. A total of 286 middle school students recovered attendance for 375 courses; 1,077 repaired a grade for at least one 6-week grading period, covering 1,272 courses; and 255 recovered a course grade for the year, which included 314 courses (Table 2). The majority of students (80%) who worked on repairing a grade for a 6-week grading period did so for only one 6-week period in that course, and 20% of participants ( $n = 254$ ) repaired two or more grades for 6-week grading periods per course (Figure 1). Considering the core subject areas, the highest percentages of courses for which students recovered a 6-week grade were in math (39%) or English language arts (ELA, 32%). Similarly, the highest percentage of courses for which a student recovered a grade for the year were in math (37%) (Table 3). In addition, courses in ELA and math had the highest percentages of students who repaired two or more 6-week grades (34% and 38%, respectively) (Table 4). Lastly, students, on average, took longer (from 1.2 to 3 weeks, depending on the subject) to repair 6-week grading periods and recover a year grade in ELA than in any other subjects (Table 4).

**Table 2.**  
A total of 2,859 middle and high school students participated in the Twilight credit recovery program.

Midle school outcomes	<i>n</i> students	<i>n</i> courses
6-week grade repair	1,077	1,272
Full-year grade recovery	255	314
Attendance recovery	286	375

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

**Figure 1.**  
The majority of Twilight middle school students who repaired a grade for a 6-week grading period did so for only one 6-week period.



Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

**Table 3.**  
The largest group of Twilight middle school students repaired a grade for a 6-week grading period or recovered a grade for the year in math courses.

Subject areas	Count of grades for a 6-week grading period recovered	Count of students who repaired a grade for a 6-week grading period	Count of students with a recovered grade for the full year
English language arts	530	410 (32%)	60 (19%)
Math	606	497 (39%)	116 (37%)
Science	278	205 (16%)	66 (21%)
Social studies	160	127 (10%)	51 (16%)
Other	36	33 (3%)	21 (7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,610</b>	<b>1,272</b>	<b>314</b>

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

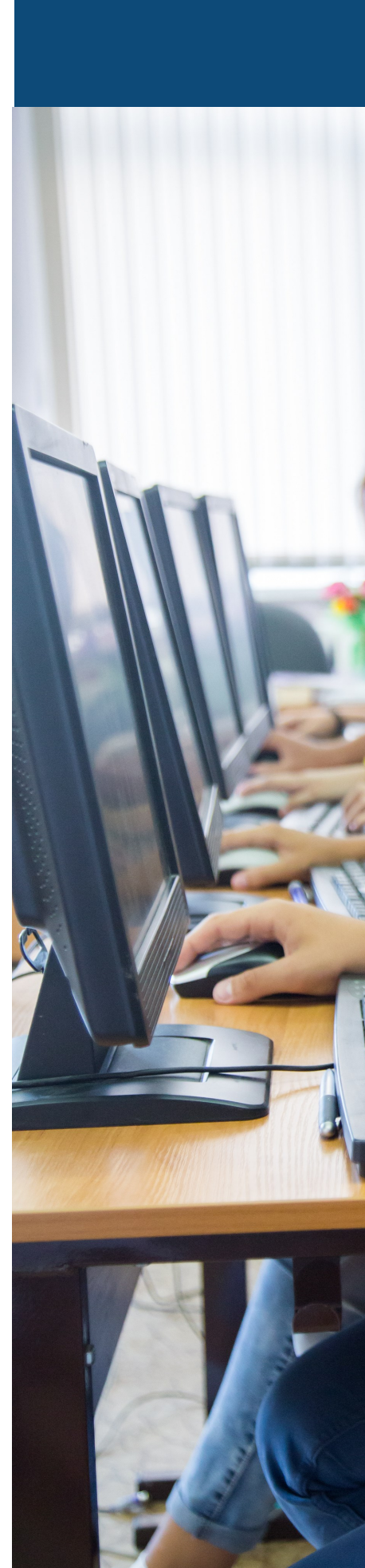


Table 4.

Twilight middle school students who repaired a grade for a 6-week grading period or recovered a grade for the year took longer to do so for ELA courses than for courses in any other subject.

Subject area	Students repairing grades in two or more 6-week grading periods per course	Average number of weeks repairing a 6-week grade	Average number of weeks repairing a grade for the year
English language arts	87 (34%)	9.8	10.5
Math	97 (38%)	8.6	8.7
Science	44 (17%)	8.8	8.6
Social studies	23 (9%)	6.8	9.4

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

## High School Outcomes

The Twilight program also assisted many high school students in recovering grades and attendance. A total of 654 high school students recovered attendance for 1,168 courses, and 880 high school students earned credit for 1,033 courses (Table 5). This accounted for 98% of all credits attempted (Table 6). Overall, high school students earned a total of 588.5 credits. Students could enroll in Twilight and earn credit for more than one course in a school year; however, the majority of Twilight students (77%) who completed their courses enrolled in one course and earned a 0.5 credit (Figure 2).

High school students earned credits in all four subject areas: ELA, math, science, and social studies. Across subject areas, the highest percentages of Twilight courses taken by high school students were in math (39%) and science (30%). Except in math courses, nearly all credits attempted were earned (Table 6). In addition, students took on average between 6.2 and 11.8 weeks to complete their Twilight course, depending on the subject. Students took longer to earn credits in social studies (11.8 weeks) and ELA (10.2 weeks) than in math or science (7.2 and 8.5 weeks, respectively) (Table 7).

Table 5.

A larger number of Twilight high school students worked on credit recovery than on attendance recovery.

High school outcomes	<i>n</i> students	<i>n</i> courses
Credits recovered	880	1,133
Attendance recovered	654	1,168

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

Table 6.

During 2018–2019, Twilight high school students earned 98% of the credits attempted.

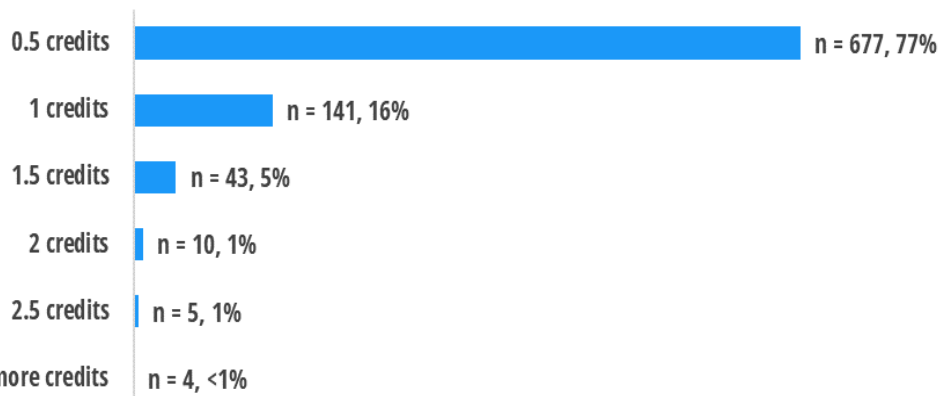
Subject areas	Number of courses started	Number of credits started	Number of credits earned	Percentage of credits earned
ELA	157	78.5	77.5	99%
Math	452	234	222	95%
Science	349	184	184	100%
Social studies	154	81	81	100%
Foreign language	43	24	24	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,155</b>	<b>601.5</b>	<b>588.5</b>	<b>98%</b>

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data



Figure 2.

Of the 880 high school students in Twilight who worked toward recovering course credits, the majority (77%) worked on and earned credit for one semester.



Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

Table 7.

Twilight high school students took longer to earn credits in ELA and social studies than in math or science.

Subject area	Average number of weeks to earn credit	Percentage of students enrolled in each core area
ELA	10.2	14%
Math	7.2	39%
Science	8.5	30%
Social studies	11.8	13%
Foreign language	6.2	4%

Source. 2018–2019 Twilight program data

## STAAR/EOC Performance of Twilight Students

Twilight students were compared with non-program AISD middle and high school students from the same campuses and grade levels who took the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) end-of-course (EOC) exam in the 2018–2019 school year. The comparison group was matched based on socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and English language learner status. Except for Algebra I, the majority of Twilight students who enrolled in core courses took the corresponding STAAR or EOC exam (Table 8). Middle school Twilight students met the passing standard at higher rates than did students in the matched comparison group in math and reading, but performed similarly to the comparison group in science (Table 8). Twilight and comparison high school students performed similarly on all EOC tests except for Algebra I, on which a greater percentage of the matched comparison group students than Twilight students met the passing standard.



Table 8.

**Twilight middle school students met math, reading, and science STAAR standards at higher rates than did students in a matched comparison group.**

STAAR content areas	Twilight			Comparison		
	Took course	Took STAAR	Met standard	Took course	Took STAAR	Met standard
Mathematics *	583	553 (95%)	67%	136	127 (93%)	33%
Reading *	474	455 (96%)	61%	594	562 (95%)	43%
Science	140	132 (94%)	63%	187	167 (89%)	59%
EOC content areas	Twilight			Comparison		
	Took course	Took STAAR	Met standard	Took course	Took STAAR	Met standard
Algebra I*	279	132 (47%)	82%	246	195 (79%)	82%
English I	85	62 (73%)	58%	255	202 (79%)	53%
English II	40	30 (75%)	53%	284	249 (88%)	56%
Biology	103	65 (63%)	80%	253	208 (82%)	84%

*Source.* AISD student records (STAAR\_EOC)

*Notes.* Only Twilight students who earned credit in the relevant content area are included. Fewer than five Twilight middle school students took the social studies STAAR exam, therefore those results were not included in this report. No Twilight high school student who took US history in 2018–2019 took the corresponding EOC exam.

\* Significant differences were found using a chi-square test of homogeneity,  $p < 0.01$ .

## Graduation Outcomes

Preliminary AISD graduation data for 2018–2019 indicated positive outcomes for Twilight participants. Of the 498 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students enrolled in Twilight courses, 88% ( $n = 452$ ) graduated; 4% ( $n = 18$ ) did not graduate from AISD because they were placed in home school, moved to a private school in Texas, enrolled in another non-reportable public or charter school; and 10% ( $n = 43$ ) had missing information. In addition, 7 (1%) of the students who graduated were originally in the 2017 or 2018 graduating cohorts, further evidence that Twilight helped at-risk students to graduate from high school.

## Student Opinions About the Program

Students enrolled in Twilight program courses in April and May of 2019 were asked to provide feedback about the program as they exited their course. A total of 1,121 Twilight students received an electronic link to the survey, and 20% ( $n = 233$ ) of these students filled out the survey.

Overall, Twilight participants had positive perceptions of the program. Of the Twilight students who answered the survey, 79% were satisfied with the program, and 73% would tell their friends and classmates to enroll in a credit recovery program if they needed a credit.

When asked about challenges they may have faced in the Twilight program, students identified several areas in which they had difficulty: They struggled with motivation to work on the material and to attend the Twilight classes regularly, their time management to stay on track and complete the course, their own difficulties with the subject matter, and their need for closer assistance or guidance from a teacher. A few students also mentioned they had

difficulties with their Twilight class taking place after school time and conflicting with other school or family activities.

Twilight students provided their thoughts about how some of those issues could be helped and how the program could improve. They suggested that having more access to teachers for help with the subject matter and guidance through the course could have helped them stay on track. In addition, some students indicated that doing more work or studying harder during the semester and/or in their Twilight course and attending classes consistently would have helped them be more successful. Lastly, students felt that having snacks would have made their experience in the program even more positive.

Lastly, of the 233 Twilight students who answered the survey, 9% ( $n = 21$ ) indicated they quit working on a credit recovery class before completing the credit. When asked why they quit their class, students often indicated personal or family issues. However, two students also indicated they did not realize their class had not ended, and one indicated his or her attendance had improved.

### Teacher and Campus Staff 's Opinions About the Program

In Spring 2019, 249 Twilight teachers and 103 administrative staff (e.g., counselors, principals, and assistant principals) were asked to provide feedback about Twilight. Twilight teachers included teachers who regularly taught at the school and other campus staff who served as teachers for Twilight courses. In total, 56% ( $n = 138$ ) of the teachers and 44% ( $n = 45$ ) of the administrators answered the survey, with a 52% response rate overall.

In general, most teachers and administrators had positive perceptions of the program. When teachers were asked about their preparation for teaching the course, 62% indicated they felt well prepared or trained to teach online courses, and 65% felt well prepared for teacher-led courses. Sixty-seven percent believed their students were well informed about the program's goal, requirements, and expectations, and 65% felt parents and guardians were well informed about the program. When teachers in high school campuses ( $n = 69$ ) were asked about how helpful they felt the program had been to their students, 77% felt the program was meeting students' needs, and 78% thought students were engaged during classes. In addition, 81% of teachers felt the program helped students stay on track to graduate.

When asked about the program's highlights and best practices, teachers and administrators identified several topics. The most common highlights included the opportunity to recover a credit or attendance, and the guidance and mentorships students received from their program instructors. In addition to these topics, teachers mentioned that the individualized and self paced aspects of the program were helpful to students.

However, when asked about areas of the program that could be improved, both groups noted that more communication between teachers, campus and program staff, and parents would have been beneficial. They also suggested that having more teachers would have allowed for smaller classes and therefore more assistance from teachers to students. Lastly, teachers and administrators indicated that program implementation documentation was very time consuming.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

During the 2018–2019 school year, 9% of AISD’s middle school students enrolled in Twilight courses. Twilight middle school students met the STAAR math and STAAR reading passing standards at higher rates than did students in a comparison group, providing evidence that Twilight supported middle school students’ academic progress.

In addition, 14% of AISD’s high school students enrolled in Twilight courses. Seventeen percent of the Twilight high school students were in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and 88% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Twilight graduated from high school. In addition, 1% of the Twilight graduating students were part of prior cohorts, indicating that Twilight helped students stay on track as well as recover credits to graduate. However, Twilight students’ math EOC outcomes and some of the feedback from teachers, administrators, and students suggested areas where the program can be improved. Therefore, the following recommendations are provided:

Given the lower EOC passing rates in Algebra I for Twilight students, compared with rates for a matched group, adjustments to the Algebra curriculum should be reviewed to determine areas for improvement.

Given teachers’ and administrators’ concerns about students’ attendance, program staff should consider possible causes and make adjustments to address them. For example, students may have conflicting activities when Twilight classes are scheduled after school hours.

Given staffing concerns at certain campuses, consideration should be given to increasing the number of Twilight teachers and classes offered at those sites. This would help lower the teacher-to-student ratio per class, allowing teachers to provide students with more assistance and guidance. In addition, consideration should be given to restructuring the process for documenting program implementation, so it is more streamlined and less time consuming.

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