

# Twilight Credit Recovery Program

## Annual Report

2020–2021

### Introduction

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 2020–2021, the program was available in middle and high schools. High school and middle school students who enrolled in Twilight courses had the opportunity to recover semester credits, grades for a 6-week grading period, 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 the demographic characteristics and academic outcomes of the students served; highlights emerging topics from the student, teacher, and program staff surveys; and provides general recommendations for the future.

It is important to note that changes to teaching and learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic affected implementation of educational programs across the district. This may also have affected survey distribution and data collection. Additionally, it is possible that these changes affected students' outcomes and general perceptions of the program.

### Twilight Participants

According to program records and AISD student enrollment records, 3,798 students participated in Twilight in 2020–2021, equivalent to 10% of the AISD middle and high school student body ( $N = 37,155$ ). Thirty-eight percent ( $n = 1,460$ ) of students who participated in Twilight were high school students from 14 high schools: Alternative Learning Center (ALC), Akins, Anderson, Austin, Bowie, Crockett, Eastside, LBJ, McCallum, Navarro, Navarro Graduation Preparatory Academy, Northeast, Richards, and Travis. Sixty-two percent ( $n = 2,338$ ) of Twilight participants were middle school students from 17 campuses: Bailey, Bedichek, Burnet, Covington, Dobie, Garcia, Gorzycki, Kealing, Lamar, Lively, Martin, Murchison, O. Henry, Paredes, Sadler Means, Small, and Webb. The program served a larger number of middle school students than of high school students. The largest group in middle school was in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (26%), and the largest group in high school was in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (12%). In addition, the majority of Twilight students were Hispanic (69%), economically disadvantaged (69%), and/or categorized as being at risk of dropping out of school (76%). Lastly, 33% were Emergent Bilingual, and 16% received special education services (Table 1). Similar to what was observed in the prior school year, AISD's student body as a whole had lower percentages of economically disadvantaged (48%) and at-risk (49%) students in 2020–2021 than did the group enrolled in Twilight. This indicates the program successfully targeted and served the students most in need of support.

Table 1.

A total of 3,798 middle school and high school students participated in the Twilight credit recovery program.

	Overall					
	<i>n</i>	% total	<i>n</i>	% total	<i>n</i>	% total
Grade 6	657	17%				
Grade 7	709	19%				
Grade 8	972	26%				
Grade 9	227	6%				
Grade 10	406	11%				
Grade 11	361	10%				
Grade 12	466	11%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,798</b>					
	Overall		Middle school		High school	
	<i>n</i>	% total	<i>n</i>	% total	<i>n</i>	% total
Hispanic	2,610	69%	1,650	71%	960	66%
African American/Black	370	10%	222	10%	148	10%
Asian	65	2%	44	2%	21	1%
White	651	17%	362	15%	289	20%
Two or more races/other	102	2%	60	2%	42	3%
At risk	2,869	76%	1,726	74%	1,143	78%
Economically disadvantaged	2,633	69%	1,723	74%	910	62%
Emergent Bilingual	1,254	33%	861	37%	393	27%
Special education	615	16%	458	20%	157	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,798</b>		<b>2,338</b>		<b>1,460</b>	

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data and AISD student enrollment records

Note. Two or more races/other include students who are American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races.

## Middle School Outcomes

The Twilight program assisted many middle school students in recovering and repairing grades and making up attendance. In 2020–2021, middle school students attempted to recover/repair 4,481 grades, credits, or attendance. The majority (60%) of these were completed successfully; students successfully recovered attendance or recovered credit or repaired a grade for 2,698 courses. Overall, students attempted to recover credits for 6-week grades most frequently; 842 students attempted 6-week grade repair for 1,850 credits (Table 2). Fifty percent of students who worked on repairing a grade for a 6-week grading period did so for only one 6-week period grade repair; the remaining repaired two or more grades for 6-week grading periods (Figure 1). Considering the core subject areas, the highest percentages of courses for which students recovered a 6-week grade was in math (41%). The highest percentage of courses for which a student recovered a grade for the year was English language arts (ELA; 34%), and courses in science had the highest percentage of students who repaired a credit (44%; Table 3). Lastly, students took between 5.2 and 9.7 weeks to repair 6-week grading periods; students took the longest in science (Table 4).



Table 2.

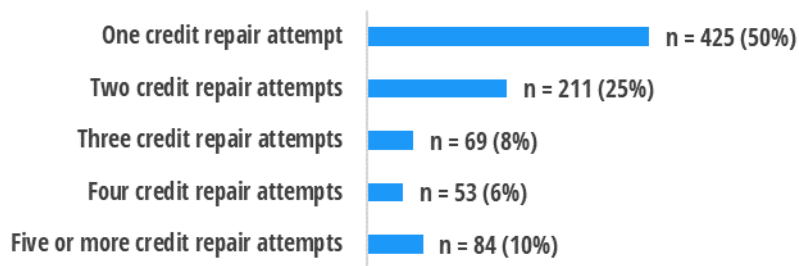
**Middle school students attempted to recover 4,481 credits.**

Outcomes	Total <i>n</i> credits attempted	Total <i>n</i> credits completed	Unique <i>n</i> students attempted
6-week grade repair	1,850	1,283	842
Full-year grade repair	1,114	648	760
Credit recovery	771	225	481
Attendance recovery	647	542	561
Missing	99	0	75

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. The number of students attempting an outcome is more than the number of unique middle school students in Twilight, as they can attempt to recover credits for multiple outcomes; some records did not specify what the outcome for the Twilight course was.

Figure 1.

**Of the Twilight middle school students who attempted to repair a grade for a 6-week grading period, 50% only attempted one credit repair.**

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Students who had two or more credit repair attempts may have attempted to repair grades for a 6-week grading period for multiple courses (e.g., one math course and one science course) or the same course for different 6-week grading periods (e.g., first 6-week math course and third 6-week math course).

Table 3.

**Twilight middle school students repaired a grade for a 6-week grading period or recovered a grade for the year most frequently in math and ELA courses, respectively.**

Subject area	Count of grades repaired for a 6-week grading period	Count of students with a repaired grade for the full year	Count of students with a recovered credit
ELA	223 (14%)	222 (34%)	35 (16%)
Math	521 (41%)	189 (29%)	54 (24%)
Science	279 (22%)	113 (17%)	100 (44%)
Social studies	205 (16%)	98 (15%)	12 (5%)
Other	1 (<1%)	15 (2%)	23 (10%)
Missing course name	54 (5%)	11 (2%)	1 (<1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>225</b>

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Other refers to electives and/or special program curriculum; subject areas could not be determined for records missing course names; students may have recovered multiple credits for multiple subject areas and/or multiple outcomes (e.g., repaired two grades for the full year in math and recovered credit in social studies).

Table 4.

**Twilight middle school students who recovered a grade took the longest in science courses.**

Subject area	Average number of weeks repairing a grade or attendance
ELA	9.5
Math	8.2
Science	9.7
Social studies	8.5
Other	5.2
Missing	7.4

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Other refers to electives and/or special program curriculum; subject areas could not be determined for records missing course names.

## High School Outcomes

The Twilight program also assisted many high school students in recovering grades and attendance. A total of 153 high school students attempted to recover attendance for 168 courses, and 1,075 high school students attempted to recover credit for 1,501 courses (Table 5). Students could enroll in Twilight and recover multiple credits in a school year; however, the majority of Twilight students (71%) only repaired credit once in the 2020–2021 academic year (Figure 2). Overall, 77% of the credits attempted were earned; students had the highest rates of earning credits in foreign language and science classes (Table 6).

Table 5.

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

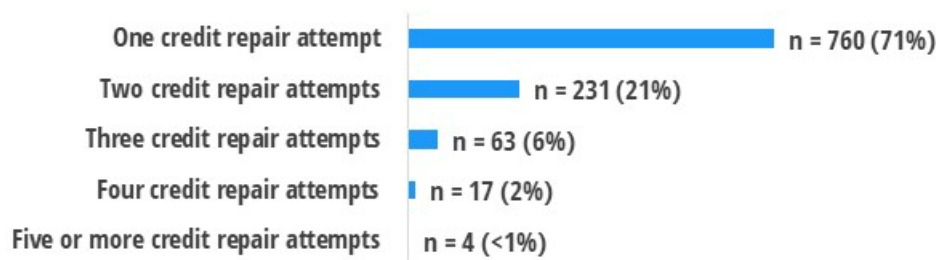
Recovery type	Total <i>n</i> courses attempted	Total <i>n</i> courses completed	Unique <i>n</i> students attempted
Credit	1,501	1,158	1,075
Attendance	168	158	153
Missing	363	0	322

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. The number of students attempting an outcome is more than the number of unique high school students in Twilight, as they can attempt to recover credits for multiple outcomes; some records did not specify what the outcome for the twilight course was.

Figure 2.

**Of the Twilight high school students who attempted to repair credit, the majority (71%) attempted to repair credit once.**



Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Students who had two or more credit repair attempts may have attempted to repair grades for multiple courses (e.g., one math course and one science course) or the same course for different periods (e.g., fall semester and spring semester).

Table 6.

**During 2020–2021, Twilight high school students earned 77% of the credits attempted.**

Subject area	Number of courses started	Number of courses completed	Percentage of credits earned
ELA	284	186	65%
Foreign language	20	19	95%
Math	439	327	74%
Science	377	315	84%
Social studies	250	204	82%
Other	6	4	67%
Missing course name	125	103	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,158</b>	<b>77%</b>

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Other refers to electives and/or special program curriculum; subject areas could not be determined for records missing course names; students may have recovered multiple credits for multiple subject areas and/or multiple outcomes (e.g., repaired two grades for the full year in math and recovered credit in social studies).

High school students earned credits in all four core 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 (29%). For all subject areas, the majority of credits attempted were earned (Table 6). In addition, students took, on average, between 5.4 and 14.8 weeks to complete their Twilight course, depending on the subject. Students took longer to earn credits in foreign language (14.8 weeks) and ELA (13.3) than in other subject areas (Table 7).

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	13.3	19%
Foreign language	14.8	1%
Math	9.9	29%
Science	7.6	25%
Social studies	8.3	17%
Other	5.4	<1%
Missing	8	8%

Source. 2020–2021 eCST data

Note. Other refers to electives and/or special program curriculum; subject areas could not be determined for records missing course names.

## Graduation Outcomes

Preliminary AISD graduation data for 2020–2021 indicated positive outcomes for Twilight participants. Of the 455 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students enrolled in Twilight courses, 81% ( $n = 369$ ) graduated.

## Students' Opinions About the Program

Students enrolled in Twilight were asked to provide feedback about the program - either by participating in a focus group or by responding in writing to a questionnaire. Overall, Twilight participants had positive perceptions of the program. The majority of Twilight students who gave feedback responded that they would tell their friends and/or classmates to enroll in the program if they needed a credit or needed to make up attendance or a grade. In addition, students believed Twilight helped them stay on track to graduate. Students also indicated they appreciated the opportunity to work at their own pace to make up a grade, credit, and/or attendance, and that their Twilight teachers were very helpful in keeping them motivated to finish their work. Lastly, when asked about challenges in the Twilight classes, the majority of the students who answered this question indicated they did not encounter challenges. However, of the students who did name a challenge, many indicated they sometimes had technical challenges with Zoom or the Internet or had difficulty staying motivated.

## Teachers' and Campus Staff 's Opinions

In spring 2021, Twilight teachers, counselors, and administrative staff were asked to provide feedback about Twilight in either a verbal or written format. This feedback was collected through personal interviews, focus groups, and written responses to interview questions. Participants were asked

- what problems they encountered with the program,
- how they were addressing these problems,
- what would help them to better address the problems, and
- what benefits they were seeing from Twilight.

Many respondents cited three main challenges in implementing the program: (a) difficulty connecting with students, (b) difficulty keeping students engaged and motivated, and (c) needing to provide support to students when they felt overwhelmed as the main challenges in implementing the program.

Campus Twilight staff mentioned using the following solutions to address these problems: designating a bilingual staff member to reach out by phone continuously to students and families, asking counselors to contact students, tracking attendance of all students in the program and all the classes they had taken, and asking teachers to hone in on the most essential skills for each subject. To better overcome these barriers, respondents mentioned it would be beneficial to have more staff members to contact and connect with Twilight students, allow teachers to have more lesson planning time and time spent with Twilight students, increase the budget, improve the Twilight dashboard, and conduct professional learning communities for Twilight staff.

Lastly, benefits of Twilight that were frequently mentioned by respondents were that students can get on track to

**"I feel as if Twilight helps students to develop the skills they need to graduate and move up to the next level."**

**"I felt like I had a second chance to do better."**

**Twilight students**

**"It was good. At first I didn't care, but later I understood that without Twilight, I will not be able to graduate, and it was really good because the teachers always helped me, and pushed me to continue and never give up."**

**Twilight student**

**"Our teachers are amazing. This program would not be possible without them and the work they put in to make sure the students grasp the necessary skills to move on. They work well with the students, really cheer them on so they can take advantage of this opportunity."**

**Principal**

**"It allows that kid to get confidence in that subject in that curriculum so they don't feel like they're defeated going into the next year. I think it builds confidence ....It's like that growth mindset."**

**Twilight teacher**

graduate on time, it motivates students once they see they are making progress, and it improves the morale of the whole school by giving students hope.

## Conclusion

Overall, Twilight student outcomes were positive. During the 2020–2021 school year, 10% of AISD’s middle and high school students enrolled in Twilight courses. The middle school students who participated in Twilight had a 60% success rate in recovering a grade, recovering attendance, or repairing credits. The AISD high school students who participated in Twilight courses earned or recovered 77% of the credits attempted. In addition, 81% of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders ( $n = 369$ ) who participated in Twilight graduated from high school. Lastly, students, teachers, and campus administrators had very positive thoughts about Twilight and indicated this program helped students recover grades and attendance so they could be promoted and stay on track to graduate.

*“Twilight affects the whole school because some students were giving up, they were depressed, and now there are fewer kids giving up and they’re motivated. It really creates a sense of culture, where kids getting second chances. It’s a resource for students who may not have access or teachers who may not be able to offer tutoring. They appreciate it.”*

School administrator



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November 2021

Publication 20.40