

## MEMORANDUM

December 19, 2014

TO: School Board Members

FROM: Terry B. Grier, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM, 2013–2014**

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, 713-556-6700

Attached is the 2013–2014 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 to provide 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 2013–2014.

Key findings are as follows:

- 477 students participated in OFSDP in 2013–2014, a 24.9 percent decrease from 635 participants in 2010–2011 and a 27.8 percent decrease from 661 participants in 2012–2013.
- OFSDP participants enrolled in 1,725 courses, completed 73.6 percent of the courses, and earned 416.5 credits.
- In 2013–2014, 62 (29.2 percent) of the 212 OFSDP seniors graduated, 45 (21.2 percent) withdrew, and 105 (49.5 percent) were still enrolled in the district.

### **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 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.

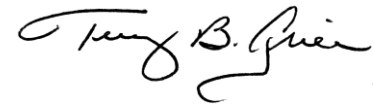
The OFSDP 2013-14 program has proven successful with a decrease in percentage of students that have withdrawn from the program (21.2%) compared to (30.7%) in 2012-13. This decrease is a direct result of a collaborative effort between OFSDP schools and the District Drop Out Prevention Department. Schools 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 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.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Carla Stevens, Assistant Superintendent of Research and Accountability, at 713-556-6700.



TBG

CJS:njk

Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Direct Reports  
Chief School Officers

Kelly Cline  
Susan Kaler

Beatrice Marquez  
Justin Fuentes



# RESEARCH

Educational Program Report

OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM (OFSDP)  
2013 - 2014

**HISD**

**Research and Accountability**

ANALYZING DATA, MEASURING PERFORMANCE.



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# OPTIONAL FLEXIBLE SCHOOL DAY PROGRAM (OFSDP) 2013–2014

## 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 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.

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. 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. 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 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. 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.

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 has no cost or staffing implications for the district and directly supports HISD's Core Initiative 3: Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports – Focus #1: Providing equity in access to high-quality educational programs and instruction. 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

- HISD's Federal and State Compliance department personnel identified the 2013–2014 OFSDP participants and campuses. Data elements include program enrollment for 2010–2011 through 2013–2014, 2012–2013 and 2013–2014 student demographics, and course enrollment and completion, credits earned, attendance, withdrawal, and graduation records for 2013–2014. Data for district and OFSDP students were extracted from the HISD's Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), Chancery Student Information System (Chancery) Ad Hoc

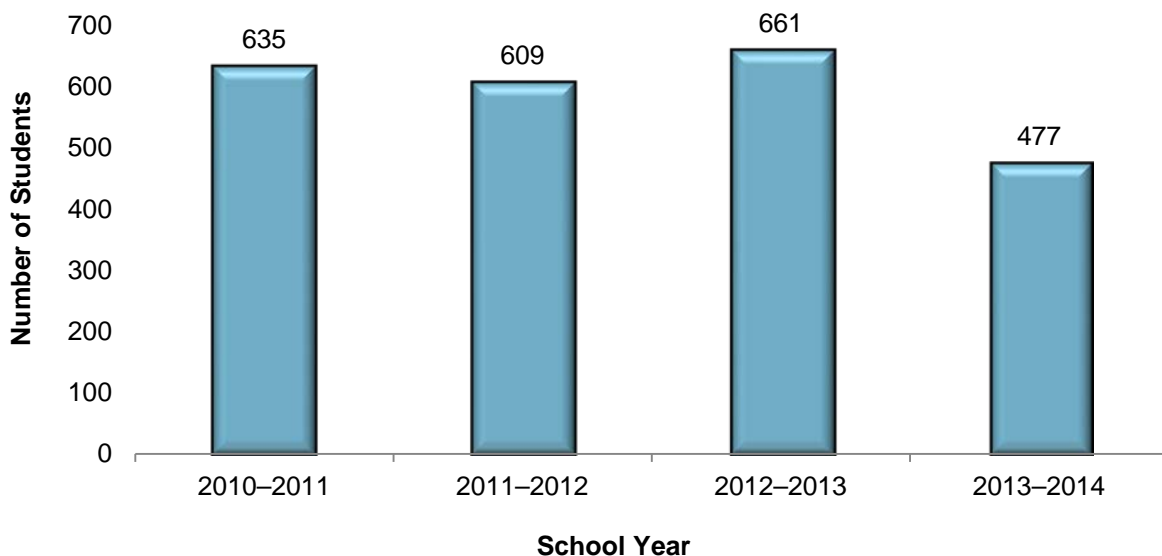
(Cognos), Chancery Historical Grade Records 2014–2015 (for the 2013–2014 Regular and Summer School terms), 400-Basic Attendance Record, 500-Flexible Attendance Data Record, and Chancery dbo\_SUP databases.

- Texas Education Agency's Secondary School Guidelines for the Foundation Curriculum 2012–2013 were used to determine core content courses and other course designations. Using the Chancery Historical Grade Records for the 2013–2014 Regular and Summer School terms, course enrollment was determined by the total number of unduplicated courses per student included in the files. The course completion rate was determined by the number of courses for which students earned course credit (which resulted from achieving an average course grade of 70.0 or better and not exceeding the course absence limit of 10% of the days scheduled for the course) divided by the number of courses in which the 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. ADA was calculated using the standard Student Attendance Formula with the 400 Record and extracted from the 500 Record.
- Four years of enrollment data and one or two years of results for other program outcomes are presented.

## Results

- During 2013–2014, 477 HISD students participated in OFSDP. This was a 24.9 percent decrease from the 635 participants in 2010–2011, the first full year of program implementation, and a 27.8 percent decrease from 661 participants in 2012–2013 (**Figure 1**).

**Figure 1. Optional Flexible School Day Program enrollment, 2010–2011 through 2013–2014**



- **Table 1** (page 3) presents the proportions of students in grades 9–12 across the district by race/ethnicity and of program participants by school. Nearly all OFSDP participants (475 or 99.6 percent) attended the Advanced Virtual Academy and the balance (2 or 0.4 percent) attended Liberty High School. Among the participants, 58.7 percent were Hispanic, 36.7 percent were

African-American, 3.6 percent were White, 0.8 percent was Asian, and 0.2 percent was Native American. No students were identified with two or more races.

- When compared to students across the district, Asian, Hispanic, and White students among OFSDP's participants were under-represented by 3.1, 1.3, and 4.5 percentage points, respectively. In contrast, African American students were over-represented among OFSDP participants by 9.5 percentage points and Native American students were equally represented among OFSDP participants and students across the district.

**Table 1. Number and Percent of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by School and Race/Ethnicity and HISD Grades 9–12 Students by Race/Ethnicity, 2013–2014**

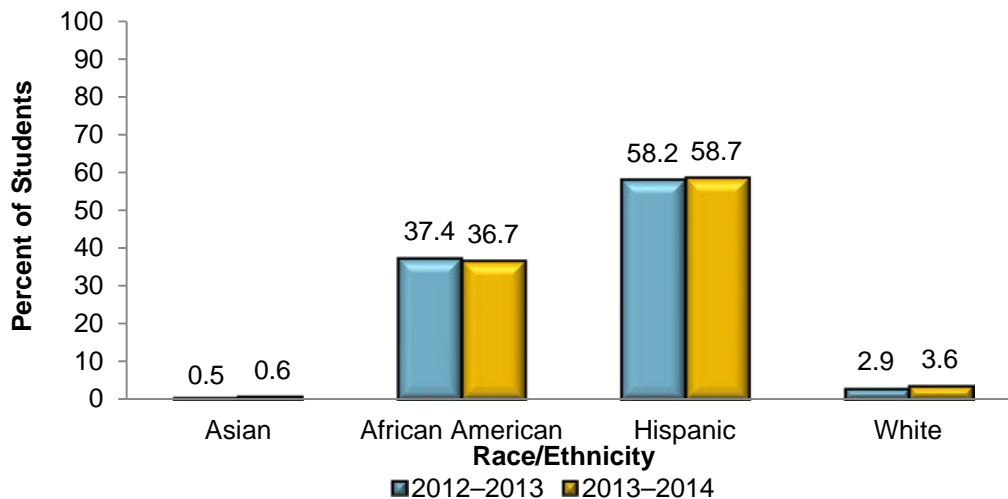
	Asian		African American		Hispanic		Native American		White		Two or More Races		Total N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Advanced Virtual Academy	4	0.8	175	36.8	278	58.5	1	0.2	17	3.6	—	—	475
Liberty HS	—	—	—	—	2	100.0	—	—	—	—	—	—	
<b>Total OFSDP</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>58.7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>477</b>
<b>HISD % (Grades 9–12)</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>12,625</b>	<b>27.2</b>	<b>27,877</b>	<b>60.0</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>3,754</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>46,482</b>

Sources: Chancery, October 24, 2014; PEIMS 2013–2014

Note: Data for 20 OFSDP students were not available (N/A).

**Figure 2** presents comparative data on the proportions of OFSDP students by race/ethnicity in 2012–2013 and 2013–2014. In both years, more than 90 percent of the students were Hispanic or African American. From 2012–2013 to 2013–2014, there was a small decrease in the proportion of African-American students (0.7 percentage point) and small increases in Asian (0.1 percentage point), Hispanic (0.5 percentage point), and White participants (0.7 percentage point).

**Figure 2. Percentage of Optional Flexible School Day Program participants by race/ethnicity, 2012–2013 and 2013–2014**



- **Table 2** presents available data for the number and percentage of economically disadvantaged OFSDP participants by school and of students in grades 9–12 across the district. Overall, on average economically disadvantaged OFSDP participants (69.0 percent) were under-represented by 5.2 percentage points when compared to economically disadvantaged students in grades 9–12 across the district (74.2 percent).

**Table 2. Number and Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by School and HISD Students Grade 9–12, 2013–2014**

School	Participants		Economically Disadvantaged	
	N		N	%
Advanced Virtual Academy	475		328	69.1
Liberty HS	2		1	50.0
<b>Total OFSDP</b>	<b>477</b>		<b>329</b>	<b>69.0</b>
HISD Grades 9–12	46,482		34,502	74.2

Sources: Chancery, October 24, 2014; PEIMS 2013–2014

**Table 3** displays the distribution of participants by age and grade level. Participants' ages ranged from 17 to 26, with a modal age of 19, followed by age 20. A total of 43.0 percent of the students were between the ages of 17 and 19. A total of 37.7 percent of the students were between the ages of 20 and 21. A total of 19.3 percent of participants were over 21 years of age.

**Table 3. Number and Percent of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by Age\* and Grade Level, 2013–2014**

Grade	Age										Total	Percent
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26		
9	1	3	10	10	5	3	2	2	-	-	36	7.5
10	1	17	25	18	16	5	3	4	3	-	92	19.3
11	-	29	43	27	16	11	4	3	2	2	137	28.7
12	-	29	47	56	32	15	8	9	9	7	212	44.4
<b>Total (N)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>99.9</b>
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Source: Chancery, October 24, 2014

\*Age as of September 1, 2013; Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- The largest percentage of participants were in the twelfth grade (44.4 percent), followed by 28.7 percent in the eleventh grade, 19.3 percent in the tenth grade, and 7.5 percent in the ninth grade (Table 3).



- Unlike the district's students' demographics, the proportion of female OFSDP participants was slightly larger than its proportion of male participants by 1.0 percentage point, with 241 or 50.5 percent females among the 477 OFSDP students (**Table 4**).

<b>Table 4. Number and Percent of Optional Flexible School Day Program Participants by Gender and School and HISD Grade 9–12 Students by Gender, 2013–2014</b>					
<b>School</b>	<b>Female</b>		<b>Male</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>
Advanced Virtual Academy	240	50.5	235	49.5	475
Liberty HS	1	50.0	1	50.0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>477</b>
HISD Grades 9–12	22,673	48.8	23,809	51.2	46,482

Sources: Chancery, August 19, 2014; PEIMS 2013–2014

- **Table 5** presents data on the enrollment status of the 477 OFSDP participants by school. As of August 19, 2014 (after the 2014 summer session), 68 or 14.3 percent of the students had graduated from an HISD high school. A total of 135 or 28.3 percent of the students had withdrawn from HISD and 274 or 57.4 percent of participating students were still enrolled in the district.

<b>Table 5. Optional Flexible School Day Program, Status of Students, 2013–2014</b>				
<b>School</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>Total</b>
Advanced Virtual Academy	68	134	273	475
Liberty HS	0	1	1	2
<b>Total (Number)</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>477</b>
<b>Total (Percent)</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>57.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sources: Chancery, November 3, 2014; AVA/Twilight High School 2013–2014 Enrollment/Graduation /Leaver file.

- **Table 6** (page 6) presents data on the enrollment status for the 212 OFSDP twelfth grade participants by school. As of August 19, 2014 (after the 2014 summer session), 62 or 29.2 percent of the seniors had graduated from an HISD high school. A total of 45 or 21.2 percent of the seniors had withdrawn from HISD and 105 or 49.5 percent of participating seniors were still enrolled in the district. In conjunction with results presented in Table 5, this indicates that 91.2 percent of the OFSDP graduates (n=68) were seniors (n=62), 33.3 percent of the students who withdrew (n=135) from the district were seniors (n=45), and 38.3 of the OFSDP students who remained enrolled in the district (n=274) were seniors (105).

**Table 6. Optional Flexible School Day Program, Status of Twelfth-Grade Students, 2013–2014**

School	Graduated	Withdrawn	Enrolled	Total
Advanced Virtual Academy	62	44	104	210
Liberty HS	–	1	1	2
<b>Total (Number)</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Total (Percent)</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Sources: Chancery, November 3, 2014; AVA/Twilight High School 2013–2014 Enrollment/Graduation /Leaver file

Note: Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

- **Table 7** presents data on participants’ final 2013–2014 enrollment and withdrawal or graduation status by grade. As of August 19, 2014, 274 students or 57.4 percent remained enrolled in HISD and 203 or 42.6 percent had withdrawn or graduated.

**Table 7. Optional Flexible School Day Program, Final Status of Students, 2013–2014**

Grade	Base Enrollment	Number Withdrawn/Graduated	% Withdrawn/Graduated	Number Enrolled	% Enrolled
9	36	16	44.4	20	55.6
10	92	34	37.0	58	63.0
11	137	46	33.6	91	66.4
12	212	107	50.5	105	49.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>57.4</b>

Sources: Chancery, November 3, 2014, AVA/Twilight High School 2013–2014 Enrollment/Graduation /Leaver file.

Note: Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

- The 2013–2014 attendance rate for the 477 OFSDP participants tracked in the PEIMS 500-Flexible Attendance Data Record was 36.5 percent. Of these students, 53 OFSDP participants were in the regular school program and their attendance was recorded in the 400-Basic Attendance Record. The average daily attendance rate of this group was 89.7 percent. However, Advanced Virtual Academy (AVA), the school with 99.6 percent of OFSDP’s participants, had an overall attendance rate of 52.6, with OFSDP students at AVA having an attendance rate of 90.0 percent. Only one of the two Liberty High School OFSDP student’s attendance was recorded in the 400-Basic Attendance Record.
- **Table 8** (page 7) presents data on OFSDP course enrollment, course completion, and the credits earned by OFSDP participants. Overall, the participants enrolled in 1,725 courses during the 2013–2014 fall, spring, and summer semesters. Students successfully completed 1,270 or 73.6 percent of these courses and earned 416.5 credits. Core course enrollment accounted for 1,049 or 60.8 percent of the total course enrollments and 277.0 or 66.5 percent of the total credits earned.

Non-core course enrollment comprised 676 or 39.2 percent of the total course enrollments and 139.5 or 33.5 percent of the total credits earned.

<b>Table 8. Optional Flexible School Day Program Course Enrollment and Credits Earned, 2013–2014</b>									
<b>School</b>	<b>Core Courses</b>			<b>Other Courses</b>			<b>OFSDP Total</b>		
	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>% Completed</b>	<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>% Completed</b>	<b>Credits Earned</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>% Completed</b>	<b>Credits Earned</b>
AVA	1,041	76.5	275.0	672	69.0	137.5	1,713	73.6	412.5
Liberty HS	8	75.0	2.0	4	100.0	2.0	12	83.3	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,049</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>277.0</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>139.5</b>	<b>1,725</b>	<b>73.6</b>	<b>416.5</b>

Sources: Chancery SMS, November 3, 2014; Historical Grades Records, November 4, 2014

## Discussion

The findings of this report provide information regarding OFSDP's success 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 support the HISD's Core Initiative 3: which encompasses providing equity in access to high-quality educational programs and instruction, and closing performance gaps between Asian and White students relative to African American and Hispanic students, including graduation and dropout rates.

This year's 27.8 percent decrease in program enrollment from 2012–2013 to 2013–2014 indicates that fewer at-risk students, African-American and Hispanic students in particular, were able to take advantage of the unique opportunities afforded through this program than last year. Nonetheless, in light of the under-represented populations of Asian and White students, over-represented population of African American students, and fairly comparable population of Hispanic students among the OFSDP participants when compared to HISD's overall demographics, this program helped to advance the academic success of African American and Hispanic students, primarily. Furthermore, in 2013–2014, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students who participated in the OFSDP was closer to the district's proportion (69.0 percent versus 74.2 percent, respectively) when compared to 2012–2013 (52.8 percent versus 71.3 percent, respectively). In addition, 272 or 57.0 percent of OFSDP's 2013–2014 participants were overage students between 20 to 26 years of age. This indicates that OFSDP's flexible assistance to overage students supports the aforementioned District Initiative as well as provides an important and invaluable service to the Houston community at large. Therefore, efforts made to enlist the participation of African American, Hispanic, economically disadvantaged, and overage students should be identified, maintained, and replicated.

Nearly 30.0 percent of participating OFSDP seniors graduated in 2013–2014. In addition, almost 50.0 percent of OFSDP seniors continued their enrollment in the district, which makes graduation a possibility for them in the future. These results are encouraging in light of the special needs of the OFSDP students. However, 21.2 percent of the OFSDP seniors withdrew from HISD schools during the 2013–2014 school year. While this was an impressive improvement over the 30.7 percent of seniors who withdrew in 2012–2013, it may be helpful to explore potential cultural and other issues that may be impacting the seniors' decision to discontinue their education in the district even after their involvement with the OFSDP program. It may also prove helpful to further ensure that all high schools serving large proportions of economically

disadvantaged students who are at risk of not graduating and other eligible students provide all eligible students with heightened and ongoing opportunities to participate in this program.

## References

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