Using ESSER Funds for Supportive, Targeted, and Flexible Credit Recovery
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Our Shared Challenge

• Students — especially students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, English language learners, and students with disabilities — have experienced **months of disrupted learning**.

• The unprecedented **infusion of federal stimulus funds (ESSER)** provides an important opportunity for districts to equitably meet students’ needs and lay the foundation for meaningful, long-term change. With careful planning and investments, leaders can ensure changes are sustainable beyond the three-year ESSER funding period.

"It’s time to redefine what ‘going back to normal’ means and use learnings from the pandemic to innovate and rethink the student learning experience."

-Elementary school dean of students in Minnesota

Source: Educators for Excellence, Voices from the Classroom, 2021
District and school leaders can best navigate ESSER investment decisions by taking a “Do Now, Build Toward” approach — choosing doable starting points for the 2021-22 school year, while designing changes with a long-terms sustainable vision in mind.

This overview lays out a long-term, “Build Toward” vision for key strategies district and school leaders are prioritizing in high schools this fall.

These guides offer a blueprint for organizing resources this school year and beyond.

See the full “Do Now, Build Toward” toolkit.
IN THIS SERIES:
How can district and school leaders use stimulus funding to make “Do Now” investments that respond to urgent student needs, center equity, accelerate student learning, and also sustainably “Build Toward” long-term improvement?

IN THIS GUIDE:
What could it look like for my district or school to organize resources in ways that expand and improve opportunities for credit recovery?
What does the research say?
Across the country, the impact of COVID-19 on high school students and their families has led to **high rates of absenteeism and course failure.**

In New Mexico, more than **40 percent** of middle and high school students were failing at least one class as of late October.

In California’s Sonoma County, **37 percent** of students across 10 districts had at least one failing grade, compared with 27 percent last year.

Nearly 40 percent of grades for high school students in St. Paul, MN were Fs — **double the amount** in a typical year.

In Houston, **42 percent** of students received at least one F in the first grading period of the year.

At least some of the increase in failure rates can be explained by higher rates of absenteeism caused by **additional responsibilities** shouldered by high school students in response to COVID-19...

For example, some high school students became the **primary daytime caregiver** for younger siblings, providing day care or at-home tech support for early grade online learning. (The 74, Associated Press)

Other high school students took on **new employment opportunities** to support their family financially when older relatives were laid off. (The Guardian)

Source: The 74
With such acute and widespread need, districts and schools should rethink common practices within current credit recovery models.

Common approaches to credit recovery are not sufficient to meet increased needs...

- Roughly 89 percent of high schools offer some form of credit recovery — either completely online, blended, or fully in-person occurring during the school day, afterschool, and over the summer. (Education Next)

- While credit recovery programs can increase graduation rates, they are not shown, on average, to increase student learning and the rigor of programs varies greatly. (AEI) In a 2015 study, the US DOE was “unable to draw any research-based conclusions about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of credit recovery programs.” (Education Next)

Limited research and case studies indicate that students can succeed in a credit recovery program that...

- Provides sufficient support
- Targets needed competencies
- Offers flexibility
Research indicates that **face-to-face instruction and support** is among the most important features in credit recovery.

Research indicates that models integrating support from staff are more effective than fully independent models.

- In a study of algebra credit recovery models in Chicago, researchers found that students in online courses **without** an onsite instructional mentor had lower assessment scores, grades, and credit recovery rates than students in online courses **with** an onsite instructional mentor and students in face-to-face courses. (The latter two saw similar grades and rates of recovery.) Additionally, students in online credit recovery experienced the course as more challenging, less clear, and expressed less confidence in their skills than their peers in face-to-face models. (American Institutes for Research)

- Milwaukee Public Schools saw **lower math and reading test scores** in a fully online credit recovery model. (Education Next)

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**Provides sufficient support**

**Targets needed competencies**

**Offers flexibility**
Models that focus on **mastering competencies** — rather than retaking the course — can get students back on track faster.

- Often, credit recovery involves a **full retake** of the course content, regardless of what course content a student has already mastered — increasing the likelihood they’ll disengage.

- In a competency-based model, students progress by **showing mastery of content**, focusing their time engaging on content they haven’t yet mastered. This allows credit recovery to target learning over seat time.
Shifting to competency-based credit recovery is one way to pilot a broader shift to competency-based learning.

- Some systems are considering a **transition to competency-based learning** in their core program, focusing on student learning and agency over seat time.
- This transition represents **significant shifts** to teacher practice, course materials, assessments, and more.
- Developing competency-based credit recovery first allows systems to begin the transition on a **smaller scale**.

Provides sufficient support

Targets needed competencies

Offers flexibility
Flexible options are key to promoting equitable access to credit recovery.

- Evening and summer programs can allow students to access necessary credits while balancing job or family responsibilities.
- Virtual evening/weekend options expand accessibility and can be pooled across schools.
- Self-paced modules (with sufficient support) can offer additional flexibilities for students to efficiently recover credits.
- Short calendar cadences (such as trimesters or quarters) can also help students avoid full-year seat time credit recovery.
## Competency-Based Credit Recovery

**DC Public Schools**

In DC Public Schools, students in credit recovery participate in distinct individualized competency-based courses that are aligned to DCPS curriculum and feature face-to-face support. Teachers are empowered to reteach students until they gain proficiency, and students work at their own pace with multiple opportunities for revisions with meaningful feedback. A credit recovery coordinator supports implementation at each school.

(DCPS Credit Recovery)

## Full Competency-Based Learning

**Boston Day and Evening Academy**

At Boston Day and Evening Academy, all courses throughout the year are competency-based and students demonstrate what they have learned when they feel ready to do so. Once they demonstrate mastery of all the benchmarks related to that class, they are rated “competent” and move on to the next class in that subject area. This holistic competency-based credit accumulation renders traditional credit recovery moot.

(BDEA Competency-Based Education)

## Flexible Evening Courses

**San Antonio Evening FLEX High School**

The Evening FLEX High School at SAISD offers evening virtual courses concurrent with daytime school to students looking to graduate in three years or who need to recover designated credits. Classes meet twice per week from 5 PM – 9 PM over an eight-week period. Learning is self-paced so students may work as quickly through course material as they wish, and teachers provide differentiated support and instruction.

(SAISD Evening Flex High School)
How can districts and schools invest sustainably?
Federal stimulus funds provide an opportunity to address students’ current needs and build toward lasting improvement.

To plan ESSER investments with long-term sustainability in mind...

- **Size the full cost of implementing strategies over time.**
  Consider all the cost components associated with implementing the strategy well, including those that address intensified needs and those that build long-term capacity. Understand which costs will need to be sustained over time.

- **Plan out how spending and organization will shift to sustain critical investments over time.**
  To avoid fiscal cliffs, have an exit strategy where possible. Carefully monitor and plan for what needs to be sustained.

- **Invest in building bridges to new ways of organizing.**
  Pilot and evaluate new approaches that lower future costs or redirect resources to sustain this strategy.

- **Define success, measure, and adjust.**
  Investing in a continuous improvement system is critical for ensuring that strategies evolve and improve over time. For more on this, see Uncharted Waters.
To invest sustainably, districts and schools will need to size the full cost of key components of their credit recovery model.

- **Instructional Staff**
  Hire additional staff to provide more support in credit recovery and/or create additional time for credit recovery.

- **Program Management**
  Stipend staff or hire as needed for program design, management, and oversight.

- **Educator Professional Learning**
  Develop or outsource professional learning on effective credit recovery.

- **High-Quality, Aligned Materials**
  Purchase or develop high-quality, aligned credit recovery materials.

- **Infrastructure & Technology**
  Purchase any additional technology or facilities improvements.
ESSER investments should balance investing in immediate student needs with building lasting capacity.

- **Instructional Staff**: Address intensified needs (✓) and Build system capacity (✓)
- **Program Management**: Address intensified needs (✓) and Build system capacity (✓)
- **Educator Professional Learning**: Address intensified needs (✓) and Build system capacity (✓)
- **High-Quality, Aligned Materials**: Address intensified needs (✓) and Build system capacity (✓)
- **Infrastructure & Technology**: Address intensified needs (✓) and Build system capacity (✓)

**Investments in these areas increase credit recovery offerings and improve them in the short-term but can also build capacity if done strategically.** For example, piloting using lower-cost roles, such as apprentice teachers, to support credit recovery.

**Investments in these areas build the capacity of the system to be able to provide more supportive, targeted, and flexible credit recovery.**

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**Plan out how spending and organization will shift to sustain critical investments over time.**
While some investments will decrease, other investments will need to be sustained in order to provide better credit recovery after ESSER.

**Key Question:** How can districts sustain increase student supports and educator professional learning — without increasing long-term costs?

Districts should be able to reduce investments in these areas back to baseline once curriculum/systems are in place.
For now, schools might...

- Give teachers stipends to provide more credit recovery.
- Give dual-certified teachers stipends to provide specialized support for credit recovery.
- Primarily offer opportunities for students to retake courses.
- Give existing staff stipends or hire staff to monitor the progress of the increased number of students needing credit recovery.

...while piloting and evaluating ways to provide better credit recovery, even without stimulus dollars.

- Pilot using lower cost roles (such as teaching assistants and apprentice teachers) to provide credit recovery support.
- Explore shifts to instruction (such as competency-based and self-paced approaches) to reduce the time some students spend in credit recovery.
- Leverage academic counselors to monitor students’ progress toward course completion.
- Shift calendars and schedules to achieve shorter course cadence (such as trimesters or quarters) to avoid year-long credit recovery.
- Create districtwide virtual course opportunities so students in credit recovery can receive consolidated support, regardless of their school.
Districts can reduce student failure rates (and thus the need for credit recovery) by improving core instruction and academic supports, and by offering more flexible credit-bearing pathways.

**“Do Now” investments to build sustainable just-in-time supports**

- **Invest in early warning systems (EWS)** to anticipate and connect students to necessary targeted supports at the right time. For more, see the Early Warning Systems guide.

- **Improve and expand academic supports** such as high-dosage tutoring and embedded intervention blocks. For more, see the Tutoring guide.

- **Develop co-requisite courses** (for example, Foundations in Math) for students who would benefit from additional support in mastering current course competencies.

**“Do Now” investments to build sustainable credit-bearing pathways**

- **Explore community partnerships** to provide alternative credit options for students (for example, dual enrollment programs with local universities or work-based credit programs).

- **Pilot virtual academy courses** to offer additional course flexibilities for students with jobs or family responsibilities.
Districts and schools will need to monitor progress and learn from experience to plan and improve on future investments.

Districts and schools should invest in rapid cycles of continuous improvement to answer questions, such as:

• Where is credit recovery being implemented with fidelity? Where it’s not, what barriers are in place that we can address?

• Which schools are bright spots where credit recovery is successful? What effective practices can we try at other schools?

• What challenges are arising, and how can we address them?

A whole-system approach to continuous improvement...

- Emphasizes a clear set of priorities
- Empowers practitioners with evidence-based strategies and logic models
- Assesses the fidelity and equity of implementation across the whole district
- Tracks costs and compares them to the ROI of other potential approaches
- Relies on cross-functional system leadership to dismantle barriers, address inequities, and support schools

ERS, Uncharted Waters
How can districts and schools target ESSER dollars now?
Investments in all components of effective credit recovery are strategic and allowable uses for ESSER dollars.

The CARES Act (ESSER I) includes allowable uses of funds related to preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19.

Note that the ‘additional’ LEA allowable uses of funds under the CRRSA Act (ESSER II), such as addressing learning loss, preparing schools for reopening, and testing, repairing, and upgrading projects to improve air quality in school buildings, already are permitted under the CARES Act.

-US Department of Education
Investments in credit recovery will vary across districts and schools based on student and staff needs and context.

For more support in estimating the true cost of implementing credit recovery sustainably in your specific context, see our ESSER Strategy Planner & Funding Calculator.

• This interactive tool allows you to see a breakdown of potential ESSER spending (SY 2021-22 – SY 2023-24) and the implied spending commitments post-ESSER (from SY 2024-25 and onward).

• For credit recovery, select the tab at the bottom labeled “#2 Time and Attention” and scroll left or right within the sheet to view the different strategies.
Districts and schools will need to invest in a variety of instructional roles to offer effective credit recovery.

Estimating staffing costs includes:

• Determining the models for credit recovery and whether they include additional staff time (such as after-school or evenings).

• Estimating the FTE needed based on expected demand and course sizes and hours.

• Considering average compensation based on types of roles leading courses.

See the “Scheduling & Staffing” section to explore options.

See our ESSER Strategy Planner & Funding Calculator to estimate staffing costs.
Effective credit recovery requires **dedicated program management** to assign students and teachers, and monitor progress.

What roles at schools and the district will monitor and improve credit recovery?

- **Hire or reassign FTE** to be responsible for design and support for a credit recovery program, such as:
  - District-level credit recovery coordinator to develop policy, lead curriculum adoption, develop training, etc.
  - School-level credit recovery coordinators to run individual school programs, including: recruiting staff members, identifying students to support, communicating with families, tracking data, and monitoring progress.

- **Stipend collaborative time** among credit recovery coordinators, counselors, and credit recovery teachers to monitor student progress.

Consider conversations with key community stakeholders — including teachers, students, and families — throughout the design and implementation process to understand students’ experiences before, during, and after credit recovery.
Districts and schools will need **additional professional learning structures**, for relevant start-up training and ongoing supports.

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To implement effective credit recovery, what investments should be made in professional learning?

- The cost of **start-up trainings** will include stipends for staff attendance and can be provided through a contracted external partner, and existing or new central office or school staff.

- The cost of these trainings will depend upon the **talent strategy**. Costs will increase particularly if credit recovery staff are less experienced and/or the instructional materials are new, like if the district is using this as an opportunity to pilot new competency-based credit recovery courses.

- **Hiring new FTE or repurposing current roles** to create site coordinators or coaches who regularly observe and offer growth-oriented feedback to staff is essential for ongoing support.
Effective credit recovery requires **high-quality, aligned curricular materials.**

What additional materials do we need for credit recovery?

- Depending on their specific credit recovery model, districts could invest in different forms of **curriculum development.** Some examples include:
  - Creating curriculum materials at the district level, which could require stipends for collaboration.
  - Sourcing curriculum materials from third-party expert organizations.
  - Additional curriculum investments may be needed if shifting to more **flexible calendar model**, like semesters, trimesters, or quarters.
  - Curriculum investments will also vary depending on extent of **competency-based curriculum** needed given credit recovery model and district context.
Additional investments in **infrastructure and technology** may be required to offer targeted and flexible credit recovery.

What physical and technological infrastructure do we need to provide flexible credit recovery?

- Investments in **facilities** will vary by instructional and scheduling decisions. Some examples include:
  - Repurposing existing facilities, like a library space for example, depending upon number of students enrolled and instructional decisions like competency-based or self-paced learning.
  - Establishing partnerships with working bank of community organizations for access to additional physical spaces.

- Technology investments can include:
  - **Continued investments in technology** (for example, 1:1 laptops) to facilitate self-paced learning, instruction across schools and after hours.
  - **Data/learning management systems** that allow for self-paced learning, track mastery between regular and credit recovery courses and across, for example, summer and school year.
What does strategic scheduling and staffing look like?
Scheduling and staffing for small group instruction centers around two key decision points.

Decision Point #1:
Identify varied times and credit opportunities to provide sufficient flexibility.

Decision Point #2:
Determine staffing approaches to provide sufficient instructional support.
## Decision Point #1
### Identify varied times and credit opportunities to provide sufficient flexibility.

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<tr>
<th>To create time for credit recovery...</th>
<th>Key Considerations</th>
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<td>Embed during the day</td>
<td>• Reduces available <strong>electives</strong> for students in credit recovery.</td>
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<td>• Shorter calendar cadence – like trimesters, quarters, etc. – could make this option <strong>more flexible</strong> for students.</td>
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<td>• Would require <strong>hiring</strong> new FTE, changing teacher assignment, or contracting with partnerships for added instructional support.</td>
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<td>• Challenging to <strong>scale</strong> and schedule if large number of students need to recover multiple credits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offer during extended day (including evenings) and remotely</td>
<td>• <strong>Additional costs</strong> include stipends for teachers to provide additional instruction before/after school, increased transportation costs for students in credit recovery.</td>
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<td>• Allows students to continue with <strong>current courses</strong> and elective choices during the day.</td>
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<td>• Can be <strong>offered remotely</strong> (synchronously for support); reducing transportation constraints, adding flexibility, and allowing for course offerings across multiple schools to better match instructor availability with student need.</td>
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<td>• Potential impact on after school <strong>extra-curricular and/or employment</strong> opportunities.</td>
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<td>• Consider <strong>partnerships</strong> to add instructional support at lower cost than teacher stipends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Include as part of summer learning opportunities</td>
<td>• <strong>Additional costs</strong> include stipends as well as operations.</td>
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<td>• Increased <strong>flexibility</strong> to support student attendance can include morning, afternoon, and weekend options.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Most sustainable and cost-effective if <strong>large number of students</strong> need to recover multiple credits.</td>
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<td>• Can be paired with <strong>summer enrichment or work opportunities</strong> to increase engagement and opportunities.</td>
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### Decision Point #2

**Determine staffing approaches** to provide sufficient instructional support.

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<tr>
<th>To staff effective credit recovery...</th>
<th>Key Considerations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hire new certified instructors with content expertise</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Likely most <strong>expensive</strong> option, especially if hiring multiple instructors to support all content areas.</td>
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<td>• Expenses decrease if hiring <strong>residents or support staff</strong> to push-in to existing credit recovery roles and support to reach smaller groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stipend expert teachers to provide additional instruction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Scheduling credit recovery <strong>before or after school or over the summer</strong> can enable current expert teachers to provide additional instruction.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Leveraging the expertise of <strong>special education and EL-certified teachers</strong> across multiple credit recovery courses can cost-effectively improve all instruction and build district capacity.</td>
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**Continued:** Decision Point #2

**Determine staffing approaches** to provide sufficient instructional support.

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<tr>
<th>To staff effective credit recovery...</th>
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| Leverage teacher residents and support staff to lead or support credit recovery sessions | - Teacher residents or other support staff can supervise **small groups of credit recovery** which would enable lead teachers to give individualized attention to specific students and offer feedback to residents and support staff.  
  - Note that sessions led by residents or support staff is preferred over fully independent courses, but training, oversight, and small group sizes are important to ensure that teacher residents and support staff are providing quality support to students.  
  - Requires **collaboration** between mentor teacher and teacher resident or support staff; successful teacher residency programs should promote opportunities to shelter and develop teachers. See our publication, *Growing Great Teachers*, for example structures.  
  - Can help decrease **group sizes** in especially large credit recovery case loads.  
  - If credit recovery is taking place during the school day, leveraging support staff and residents allows offering credit recovery **without reassigning teachers** from their courses to provide credit recovery.  
  - Can be temporary or **part-time staff** (see Appendix for note on part-time staff in this moment). |

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<th>Work with community partners</th>
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| - Some community partners could provide **supervision and instructional support** for credit recovery courses.  
  - Can provide **additional staff at scale** and can allow teachers to remain assigned to regular courses.  
  - Examples to consider include local Boys and Girls Clubs, Citizen Schools, City Year, etc. |
Additionally, there are **district-level enabling conditions** that can either expand or limit how effectively schools can staff and schedule credit recovery.

### Schedule and Course Flexibility

- The ability to **develop schedules** that account for students’ needs (so that they can reliably attend credit recovery) and progress (so they can shift their focus when credits have been earned), including trimester and quarter courses.

- **Graduation requirements** that include flexibility around course taking.

### Staffing Flexibility

- **Teacher-of-record policies** that can connect high-quality instructors to students recovering credits and adapt as student and school needs change.

- Ability to **contract with third-parties** (such as local organizations and community colleges) to provide credit recovery support or release time for teachers.

- **Equitable funding** so that schools with the greatest need for credit recovery personnel can hire, repurpose, train, and support staff to ensure high-quality credit recovery instruction.
The following pages show **concrete examples** of these decision points in action.
 Example #1

Twilight academy staffed by ‘stipended’ expert teachers.

KEY DECISION POINTS
- Offer credit recovery during specified afternoon/evening courses.
- Stipend expert teachers to lead credit recovery courses.
- Stipend or hire a program manager (who may be another instructional expert) to coordinate credit recovery.

KEYS TO SUCCESS
- Shared-discipline credit recovery teachers should collaborate with each other to co-create and implement feedback on instructional materials and practices.

TRADEOFFS
- In this example, offering stipends to certified teachers is among the more expensive staffing options.

TERM LENGTH: 12 weeks
2 evenings per week students attend 4 hour-long courses (for example, Tuesday and Thursday from 5-9pm).

Students meet with a teacher on specified evenings and use class time to work through material, take quizzes, conduct labs, sit for exams, etc. Teachers work with students to ensure comprehension while differentiating to provide live, just-in-time support. Students move through the curriculum at their own pace and may finish before the 8-week term is complete.

1 evening per week (for example, Wednesday) teachers collaborate for 90 min.

During this time, credit recovery teachers meet in departments to plan for next term and debrief observations. Can also be used to share updates with general education teachers.
Example #1

Twilight academy staffed by ‘stipended’ expert teachers.

ALSO CONSIDER

- A district-wide twilight academy with expert teachers from multiple schools and opportunities for students to learn with and from peers from other schools.
- Leveraging Special Education teachers, EL teachers, teacher residents, or TAs/support staff to reduce group size in larger classes to decrease FTE costs.
- Using technology to hold online evening classes with synchronous and asynchronous time.
- Offering a Saturday option for students who have other responsibilities in the evenings.

SEE HOW OTHER PLACES APPROACH THIS

- **San Antonio Public Schools**: Evening FLEX High School offers district-wide synchronous credit recovery courses 2 evenings/week over 8-week terms led by San Antonio ISD teachers.
- **Austin ISD**: Twilight Evening School offers schoolwide teacher-led or self-paced credit recovery each semester.
- **DC Public Schools**: The district offers self-paced competency-based credit recovery before and after school.

**TERM LENGTH: 12 weeks**

2 evenings per week students attend 4 hour-long courses (for example, Tuesday and Thursday from 5-9pm).

Students meet with a teacher on specified evenings and use class time to work through material, take quizzes, conduct labs, sit for exams, etc. Teachers work with students to ensure comprehension while differentiating to provide live, just-in-time support. Students move through the curriculum at their own pace and may finish before the 8-week term is complete.

1 evening per week (for example, Wednesday) teachers collaborate for 90 min.

During this time, credit recovery teachers meet in departments to plan for next term and debrief observations. Can also be used to share updates with general education teachers.
Example #2
Self-paced ‘Credit Recovery Lab’ staffed by contracted FTE.

KEY DECISION POINTS
• Assign students who need support in recovering credits to the lab one period during the standard academic day.
• Increase class sizes to free teacher residents to push-in and support small group or individualized instruction in the credit recovery lab.
• Hire new FTE or repurpose instructional coach to serve as pedagogical expert and coordinator for the credit recovery lab.
• Purchase or implement self-paced credit recovery curriculum.

KEYS TO SUCCESS
• Ensure the schedule allows for consistent teacher-resident groupings so students have access to the same support over time.
• Ensure every period has instructional support in each content area so all students have access to content-specific support.

TRADEOFFS
• In this example, students have fewer elective opportunities and core class sizes are larger.

Mr. Byrd is first-year teacher completing a post-baccalaureate program through a local university. He spends half of his day co-teaching biology with an expert teacher and the other half in the credit recovery lab, with two other teacher residents and supported by Ms. Hardy. While students engage in a self-paced online course, Mr. Byrd checks-in and answers any science-related questions.

Ms. Hardy is dual certified in special education and general education and was hired to coordinate the credit recovery lab. She meets individually with students and gives feedback to teacher residents like Mr. Byrd.

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<th>Ms. Hardy</th>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Collaborative Planning</td>
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Continued: Example #2
Self-paced ‘Credit Recovery Lab’ staffed by contracted FTE.

ALSO CONSIDER

- Staffing TAs, other support staff, or even community partners to push-in to credit recovery lab instead of resident teachers (though costs vary with these staffing models).
- A rotating schedule for instructional coaches to serve as credit recovery lab coordinator rather than hiring new FTE.
- Scheduling electives on a quarterly basis so that students can take a new course when they’ve recovered necessary credits.

SEE HOW OTHER PLACES APPROACH THIS

- **Metro Nashville Public Schools:** The credit recovery lab offers courses monitored by certified, licensed teachers.
- **Boston Public Schools:** Partnership with the East Boston YMCA enables the district to offer a credit recovery lab throughout the day.

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<td>Credit Recovery Lab</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Collaborative Planning</td>
<td>Credit Recovery Lab</td>
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Mr. Byrd is first-year teacher completing a post-baccalaureate program through a local university. He spends half of his day co-teaching biology with an expert teacher and the other half in the credit recovery lab, with two other teacher residents and supported by Ms. Hardy. While students engage in a self-paced online course, Mr. Byrd checks-in and answers any science-related questions.

Ms. Hardy is dual certified in special education and general education and was hired to coordinate the credit recovery lab. She meets individually with students and gives feedback to teacher residents like Mr. Byrd.
Example #3:
Summer recovery staffed by ‘stipended’ expert teachers.

**KEY DECISION POINTS**
- Credit recovery courses are offered in a summer academy, with two potential course sessions (morning and afternoon) for which students sign up to accommodate their other responsibilities.
- Stipend expert teachers to lead credit recovery courses.
- Stipend or hire a program manager (who may be another instructional expert) to coordinate credit recovery.

**KEYS TO SUCCESS**
- Shared-discipline teachers should collaborate with each other to co-create and implement feedback on instructional materials and practices.
- Shared-student teachers should collaborate to share experiences, data, and leverage relationships to motivate students’ success in multiple courses.

**TRADEOFFS**
- In this example, offering stipends to certified teachers is among the more expensive staffing options and the summer offering includes additional operating costs.
Example #3:
Summer recovery staffed by ‘stipended’ expert teachers.

ALSO CONSIDER

- A district-wide summer accelerator with expert teachers from multiple schools and opportunities for students to learn with and from peers from other schools.
- Leveraging teacher residents or TAs/support staff to reduce group size in larger classes to decrease costs.
- Pilot competency-based learning in summer credit recovery courses, or target accelerating for specific grades. For example, a 9th-grade transition-to-high school academy, or a 12th-grade college success academy.
- Pair half-day credit recovery with enrichment/internship/work experiences for more engagement and diverse experiences.

SEE HOW OTHER PLACES APPROACH THIS

- **DC Public Schools**: Offers a district-wide 4-week competency-based credit recovery program, this year supplemented by a summer accelerator for students who would benefit from additional support to kick-start their upcoming school year.
- **Chicago Public Schools**: Host Freshmen and Sophomore Connection programs to jumpstart learning in transition grades.
This guide was authored by Mark Heath (Associate), Eddie Branchaud (Manager) and Kristen Ferris (Partner). It is the result of collaborative efforts among numerous people, both within and outside of ERS. We would like to acknowledge the following ERS team members who contributed to this work: Crystal Chu, Gloria Samen, Gayatri Mehra, Torrie Mekos, Daven McQueen, and Karen Hawley Miles.

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As your team weighs the possible tradeoffs associated with different approaches, makes decisions about how to organize resources, and plans for how to evolve and scale your approaches over time, we encourage you to adapt these guides to meet your unique needs and context.

To share your work or get help navigating your “Do Now, Build Toward” approach, contact us.
Appendix
Note: In this moment, hiring **part-time staff** may offer flexibility and options that strategies requiring additional, specialized, full-time staff may not.

- **Enables schedule flexibility** (for example, part-time staff members can easily be scheduled into credit recovery periods during the day or support after school credit recovery).
- Likely **more affordable** option, since part-time staff are working fewer hours and not specialized.
- **Enables concentrated expertise and lower caseloads** if the part-time staff is only responsible for a small number of students.
- Provides more **individualized attention and support** for each student to feel known by at least one adult given potentially lower caseloads.
- Allows for **hiring from a greater and non-traditional talent pool**, which is key in this moment given school staffing needs.
- Can be **added to existing structures or used in combination** with any of the other strategies.
- **Clear exit plan** as the need for additional credit recovery decreases.