

What Drives The Success Of Students At The Manchester FLIGHT School?

The Value of The FLIGHT Program

Before explaining the details of the FLIGHT credit recovery program and the results from it, I wanted to express my gratitude for being a part of this. It was truly a special experience for me to witness the positive impact school staff can have in such a short amount of time. This program embodies the purpose of education, which is to find the best ways to educate children. It was incredible to experience how one month of school can make such a difference in the lives of the students involved. This program feels different from other credit recovery programs that I have been a part of in the past. The mindset of the staff wasn't on making sure assignments were completed, it was on making sure students actually learned, it was about getting the kids to open up and collaborate with each other. It was about guiding these students to find themselves once again. *(side note : too often we make the discussion about credits and graduating more about passing classes than about learning. I think this program could be the start of ensuring that every student that every graduate is equipped with skills to become successful in life after high school)*

I witnessed a dramatic change in the entire student population. The students entered nervous, uncomfortable, and honestly, many reported that they didn't expect to enjoy it at all, much like their previous experiences in school. So many students reported that they haven't talked to other people in classes in years because they didn't want to, or were afraid to. These students have opened up, they share ideas with each other, and support each other. So many students explained how this is the most comfortable they have been in school and the happiest they have been in school, which led them to opening up and doing work. They shared stories with the teachers and their peers about their vulnerabilities and fears and about the difficult experiences they have gone through.

I leave this program hopeful and excited about the future. This is the feeling that I entered the profession feeling.... That education can make a difference. We had 42 disengaged students come to school every day, at first because they had to, but then because they wanted to. There was legitimate joy that came from these students. The happier they were, the more they worked in the classroom.

We employed all research supported educational ideologies, including mastery based grading, which gave the students something to work towards.... Proving they could do something rather than completing a paper. This program did so much more than get students credit. For most of them, it gave them the belief that they are important and that they are fully capable of being successful. Imagine if every student could experience school this way. Imagine if school engaged every student. Imagine if school made students more confident and less stressed. Imagine if school is a place where every student felt comfortable to be themselves. This is what was accomplished in 1 month of the school.

My biggest fear is that the lessons we learned from this program will fade to join the background noise of another busy school year rather than being used to pioneer a path towards more successful teaching and learning habits. I write the following pages as a summary of what we did, what the results were, and what the implications of those results are on our educational program as a whole in the hopes that we continue to use our resources to improve the educational experience of every student in our school district.

Background Information About The FLIGHT Program

The purpose of the FLIGHT program aims to solve two current problems in the Manchester school system. The first is that there is a large number of students that are currently credit deficit (not on track to graduate). Upon completion of this course, students could earn up to 8 credits, or 1 year of credits, and be back on track to graduate. The second problem this program aims to solve is the presumed cause of the credit deficiency.... Student disengagement (and the resulting absenteeism and credit loss).

To address the root of the credit deficit problem, the teachers and the program will provide the following educational philosophies:

1. Inquiry driven learning.
2. Project based learning.
3. Mastery based grading.
4. Culturally relevant learning.
5. High levels of support staff.
6. Adults making authentic relationships with the students.
7. Developing a sense of belonging through team building.
8. Immediate and continuous feedback.
9. A strict attendance policy with follow up from adults in the program.

The belief of the staff is that there is nothing “wrong” with the students, nor are the students “unintelligent”. The students, for various reasons, became disengaged with education. The purpose of the staff is to re-engage these students in the process of learning. It is theorized that if the lessons are engaging enough (student driven), then students will be less likely to escape to their cell phones, more likely to be excited about coming to school, and more likely to work with their peers on projects. The hope is that changes made during this 1 month program will translate to improvement in the following school year. The students will be followed throughout the course of the following school year to determine how impactful this program was. This program will be evaluated on both the impact during the program, and the impact on students grades and attendance during the following school year.

While at FLIGHT, students will be continuously reminded of their purpose. This program, as shown in the students “Flight Plan” below, is about them doing something for themselves and their **Future**. It’s about **Learning**, it’s about **Imagining** a different path for themselves and their learning. They will be reminded of their short and long term **Goals**. They will be expected to be **Here**, both physically and mentally, and they will be challenged to **Trust** themselves, the adults, and their peers.

MANCHESTER “FLIGHT PLAN”

F	Future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is about YOUR FUTURE. • Every adult is here because we believe your FUTURE is bright. • Believe that you can accomplish whatever you put your mind to. • The work you put in is an investment in your FUTURE.
L	Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEARN about yourself and what you want out of your life. • LEARN that you are capable of success. • LEARN as much as you can in the time you are here. • <i>Knowledge and skills open many doors to your future.</i>
I	Imagine Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IMAGINE what school would be like if your needs were truly put first. • IMAGINING what <u>is would look like</u> lead us to INNOVATE the FLIGHT School. • If something isn't working, don't keep doing it, find or make a better solution.
G	Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GOALS are the stepping stones to your future, so set realistic daily goals to get onto the path you want. • Set GOALS with the intention of achieving them.
H	Here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be HERE be PRESENT • When you are HERE you expect excellence, so you work hard for it. • Being “HERE” means physically AND mentally. Stay focused. Limit distractions.
T	Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRUST is the foundation of a strong team and strong relationships. • TRUST yourself. • TRUST in the intentions and kindness from the people here. • TRUST this summer will help your future.

Student Class Schedule:

Students were divided into 3 cohorts of 14 students. The purpose behind cohorting is to quickly establish relationships amongst the students within the group. The school day runs from 9:00am to 1:00pm, and students will take 2 classes per day. The first 3 days of the program will be dedicated towards developing a sense of community. This will create a sense of comfortability and belonging within each cohort. Students will get to know each other through various team building activities and challenges.

The students will take 3 classes that allowed them to earn 2 to 2.5 credits each:

Science In The Kitchen

Students will engage in hands-on, project based learning. They will earn a culinary credit and science credit. Students will engage in the engineering process several times throughout this course to earn their science credit and will make several meals from scratch to earn their culinary credit. This inquiry based learning is done through collaborating with peers. This is considered “hands on” inquiry.

Struggle To Strength

Students will engage in reflective learning, where they identify and process through something in their life that caused them to struggle, but they were then able to overcome that struggle. They will write a personal narrative about their experiences and how it shaped them to earn an ELA credit. They will, as small groups, create a podcast about their experiences and share them with each other to earn a performing arts credit, and in both of these projects, they will reflect on their mental health at different points in their lives to earn a half credit of health. This class is an “interpersonal” inquiry driven class.

Data Science

Students will engage in project based inquiry by identifying, researching, and analyzing their choice of societal problems to earn a social students credit. They will research these issues and find, collect, and represent statistics they can use to help analyze and describe the problems to earn a math credit, and will use technology to research and represent their findings to earn a half credit in technology. This class is a “research based” inquiry class.

To earn “mastery” a student needed to prove their proficiency in at least 3 of the 5 power standards of each discipline. 3 of 5 resulted in a grade of a “C”. 4 of 5 resulted in a “B”, and 5 of 5 resulted in an “A”.

The final credit was a reflection paper written by each student about their growth and their importance.

The rubrics are linked below:

[Science In The Kitchen](#)

[Struggle To Strength](#)

[Data Science](#)

Background Information On Students:

These are students who are at least 1 year behind in terms of credits. These are the students who typically do not finish high school and currently have no way to graduate high school on time (with their initial group). These are students who have had attendance issues for a variety of reasons, including: a feeling that education is not meant for them (not culturally relevant or missing connections with people), personal or family trauma, loss of confidence, anxiety, etc... Often these issues are manifested as undesirable behaviors in school: truancy, skipping class, continuous cell phone use, refusal to do work, sleeping in class, misbehavior, etc...

Although these students are severely behind in terms of credit, they are showing signs of motivation. The admitted students needed to write a paper about why they wanted to be admitted to the program and they needed to create and submit a resume in the form of their MHS School Profile.

Attendance and Credit History Of The Students In The Program

The following link is the student data from before the program, during the program, and as the first quarter progresses, after the program. [Student Data](#). The students in this program attended school only 59% of the time on average in the previous school year (2021-2022) and 65% of the time the year before (2020-2021).

The students had a similar trend with their credits. In the previous school year they earned an average of 3.1 credits, which was down from 3.8 credits in the year before. On average, the students in this program earned 7 credits in the past two years, which is about what is expected in a typical year.

These are students that are not on track to graduate on time, which often leads to a higher chance of dropping out. Historically minority students have the highest odds at graduating late or not graduating at all. This cohort is 48% black, 38% latin american, 12% white, and 2% native american.

Planning For Success : Student and Staff Expectations

Student Expectations:

1. Arrive every day on time (15 minutes late is considered tardy). 1 absence loses a credit, 2 absences results in removal from the program. 1 tardy = 3 absences.
2. Bring their laptops with them to every class.
3. Complete all of the work given to them.
4. Work with their peers.
5. Seek support when they are struggling.
6. Limit personal distractions such as cell phone use.

Staff Expectations:

1. Planning ahead - lesson plans that are a mixture of interactive teamwork and individual work are expected. The lessons are expected to be project based.
2. Plan mastery based lessons that connect to the content specific rubric.
3. Collaborate with co-teachers
4. Conduct individual students meetings at minimum, weekly to discuss student progress.
5. Makes personal connections with the students
6. Check on all student work (not just “checking in”)
7. While co-teaching, share any role or responsibility at any time. When one is presenting, all the others are monitoring. Rotate “lead” teachers.
8. Limit teacher-led instruction. Mostly student driven.
9. Ask for support if a student is not engaging when prompted.

Identifying Factors That Negatively Impacted Student Success and A Plan To Mitigate The Impact of Those Factors

Factor Impacting Success	Plan To Mitigate The Impact
<p>Attendance : students attended an average of 59% of school days.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Teachers take attendance within the first 5 minutes of every class and admin / behavior techs / secretaries follow up if students are not where they need to be. b. Call every parent every day if their child is absent. Call multiple times. c. Have immediate conversations with students if absent or tardy d. Incentivized attendance - if they miss more than 2 days, they are out of the program. If they miss a class, they lose credit. Each day is important.

<p>Cell Phone Use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hands on, project based learning. Students are constantly engaged, so they don't need to engage with the cell phone. b. Have an upfront discussion about the role and expectation of cell phone usage (they should not be used) c. There is a low adult vs student ratio (about 4:1), so every time a phone came out, an adult was instructed to sit next to a student and talk to them to refocus them. d. If the cell phone is an issue, an administrator will talk to them to see if there is a bigger issue and remind the students of their purpose.
<p>Work Avoidance (in class and being in the hallways)</p>	<p>Hallways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If students are in the hallways for longer than they should be, they are talked to and the time they are given is limited. ii. The classes take place in a single hallway, which limits places to hide. The students WILL be seen. ii. The project based nature of the classes keeps the students more engaged, and thus in the classroom. <p>In class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If a student is avoiding work, an adult sits with them 1 on 1 to re-engage. If this does not work, support staff is brought in or a student is brought out to have a positive discussion. ii. Collaborative group projects provide the opportunities to engage.
<p>Trauma</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The first few class periods were strictly for team building. Students were asked to reflect on what they needed to do to be successful. The conversations are framed around 21st century skills. Building a safe community is important for students to feel comfortable to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be in the classroom 2. Engage in the work 3. Work with others 4. Ask for help b. If a student is struggling emotionally, they will have adults to talk to. Adults lead with empathy during conversations, and collaborate with the student to set them on the path of success again. c. Adults are positive with the students and continuously express their belief in their students.

Results and Implications of The FLIGHT Program

Results

This program has the initial data to prove it was successful. The students had excellent attendance, earning their credits on a mastery based scale. The confidence of the students increased dramatically and they enjoyed school, something many of them have not experienced in a long time. The students were respectful, receptive to learning and feedback, and behaved appropriately. Students reported a desire to continue these successes into the following year. 93% of the students reported they believe they will attend school at a high rate in the following school year and every student believes their grades will either improve or significantly improve in the following year.

This program was successful at getting students back on track and increasing their confidence in themselves as students. The long term impact of this program remains to be seen, but will be investigated as time passes.

To see all of the student response data, click the link for : [Student Reflection Survey](#)

Changing Mindsets

The perception of this program changed throughout the month in which it ran. Adults in the other summer programs expressed concern about having so many traditionally unsuccessful students in one area. The consensus was that many students wouldn't be able to handle the strict behavior and attendance guidelines and a high presence of security would be needed and that additional security would be needed.

By the end of the program, these same people, security, support staff, etc... were astonished. There was a renewed belief and optimism that any student in our school can be successful if provided the appropriate structure to do so. They asked what it is that we did that helped students come to school more, behave better, and do more work. The program consisted of 42 students that security was very familiar with throughout the school year due to a variety of problems, and they were shocked that they all came to school on time, stayed in class, and did their work. The answer for what we did was simple. We challenged the teachers to make lessons so engaging, the students would want to do them. We set high expectations for learning, attendance, and behavior. And we found that these students, who so many had given up on, thrived under these conditions.

The most noticeable change in student behavior was self-confidence. 97% of the students reported an increase in their confidence as a student and 59% reported a very large increase in their confidence. Students explained that feeling comfortable with their peers and teachers played a large role in that. They reported the team building activities in the beginning of the program played a significant role in getting them comfortable working with each other. The value of spending time to make the cohorts come together as a team cannot be overstated enough. Most students attributed those first 3 days of the program as the reason why they opened up and felt comfortable enough to be successful.

Figure 1 : The Importance Of Team Building In Developing A Culture For Learning

How valuable were the team building sessions in the first few days in terms of making it easier to work with others to learn?

29 responses



Figure 2 : Student Reported Confidence As Learner

Rate how much your confidence has grown as a STUDENT / LEARNER during FLIGHT School

29 responses

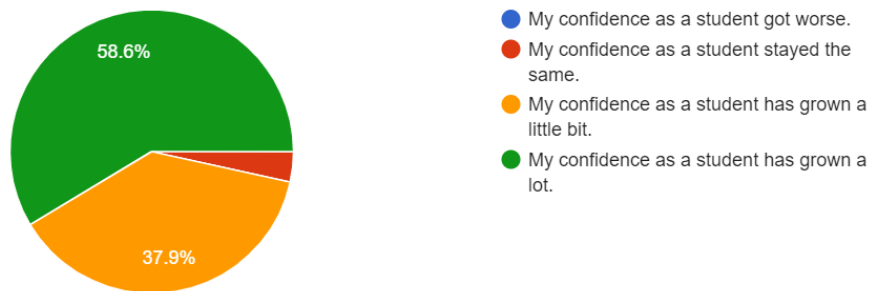
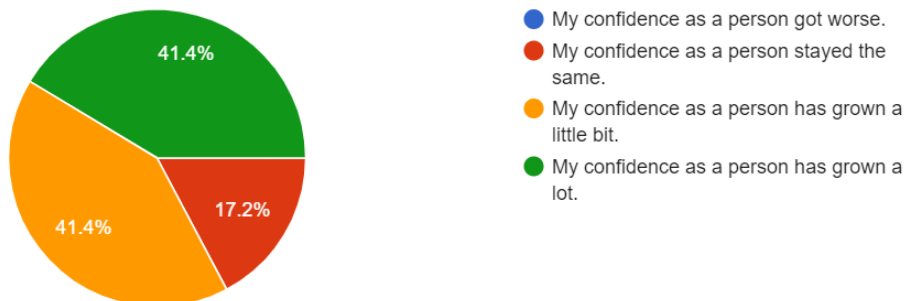


Figure 3 : Student Reported Confidence In General

Rate how much your confidence has grown IN GENERAL during FLIGHT School

29 responses



Credits

Students were evaluated based on mastery of content specific skills, not completion of work. They were held accountable to prove they can be successful in the various content areas. Of the 42 students in the program, only 2 did not earn all 8 credits. This means 95% of the students earned all 8 credits. Of the two that did not earn all credits, one did not come to school for the final week, despite many phone calls and home visits, and the other earned 6.5 of the 8 credits, but struggled emotionally in the struggle to strength class and was set up with counseling. As shown below, the students believe that because of this program, they will be more successful in the future.

Figure 4 : Credits Earned Since 2020

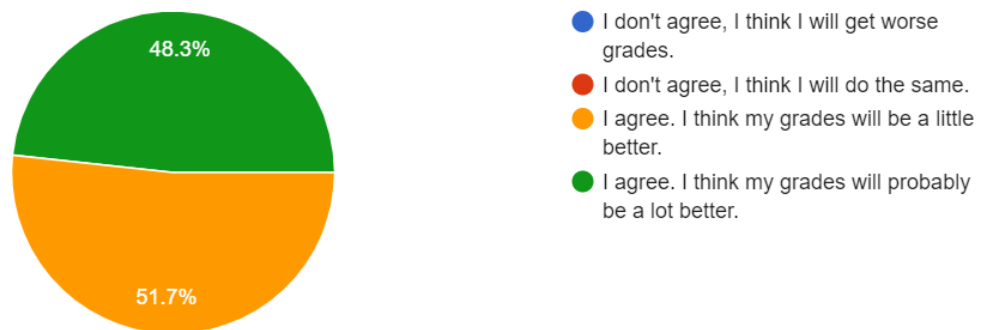
	2020-2021	2021-2022	FLIGHT 2022	On Track For Q1 2022-2023
Average Amount of Credits Earned	3.75	3.0	7.8	

Figure 5 : Student Belief On Their Future Grades

How much do you agree with this statement: I believe that I will get better grades in school after going through FLIGHT School?



29 responses



Attendance

Student attendance was much improved during this month of school than during the school year. The student average attendance rate in the 2021-2022 school year was 59%. During this program, it was 98%. The students that missed a day made up the lesson on Friday sessions, so the students did not miss a lesson. As reported by the students, factors that led to this were : the strict attendance policy, the high stakes nature of the program, the repeated phone calls home to students that were more than 5 minutes late, and the structure of the program, which they found enjoyable. There was one attendance issue during this month. One student did not come for the final week of classes, and thus lost out on all of those credits from the classes he missed.

Figure 6 : Attendance Since 2020

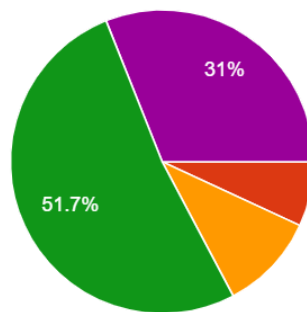
	2020-2021	2021-2022	FLIGHT 2022	Q1 2022-2023
Average Attendance (%)	66.1	59.2	97.8	

Figure 7 : Student Belief On Future Attendance In School

How much do you agree with this statement: I believe that I will have better attendance in school after going through FLIGHT School?



29 responses



- I don't agree, I think my attendance will be worse.
- I don't agree, I think I will come to school the same amount.
- I agree. I think I will come to school more often than before.
- I agree. I think I will come to school a lot more often than before.
- I agree. I think I will have very good attendance (95-100%)

Take-Away About Student Ability

These students have missed a significant portion of their educational experience, but are not unintelligent. It was found these students had brilliant thoughts, but were skill deficient in many areas (such as graphing). When taught the skills, students were capable of completing work on their own. It was discovered that when students are in class, and engaged in their learning, they are all very capable. The key to the success of the program was the quality of instruction. The project based, culturally relevant lessons engaged the students. Student time in the hallways and bathrooms were limited. Student cell phone use was greatly reduced (but not eliminated) during this program, likely as a result of conversations about cell phones as a distraction as well as lessons that engaged them.

Where Students Struggled

There were two academic areas in which some students struggled. In the “struggle to strength” course, students were asked to deeply reflect upon difficult experiences in their lives. While this proved powerful for most students, it also proved difficult as students struggled to be able to identify and describe their emotions. Several students came in for extra days and stayed after school with the teachers to work on their essays because they got stuck and needed support to help them process their thoughts. Students also struggled from time to time in the “data science” course. They were asked to research a topic of their choice and analyze the data about it. Students did well on their final products, but some students found the skill developing assignments to be difficult or boring, but they ultimately proved necessary and students learned from them.

Thoughts and Reflections From The Students

What about this program helped you to become successful?

- "It made me more confident and believe in myself so i know I can do the work"
- "I would say feeling comfortable with the groups and the style of teaching has helped me to become successful ."
- "Feeling Comfortable with groups"
- "The attendance policy made me become more successful and being comfortable with my group"
- "i got comfortable very fast, the teachers were very nice, i loved the way that there was enough staff, peers were nice. i really love this program"
- "the teachers positivity and vibes were good they helped alot."
- "What helped me was waking up at like 8:00 instead of like 6 something in the morning . and this program helped me on my communicating skills in groups."
- "The attendance policy helped and feeling comfortable with my groups because I had more confidence to do tasks."
- "I think the best thing they've helped me with was helping me gain confidence with socializing with people and being open with my thoughts."

What are your thoughts on the assignments / projects?

- "They were pretty engaging and challenging, but fun to do overall."
- "a mix of fun, challenging but in a fun way, some assignments were also easy. Overall it was a great expience and i learned a lot."
- "there fun and i enjoyed doing them"
- "i found them interesting which made me want to do even more"

Explain how it feels to have caught up on so many credits.

- "Good and its like im getting a second chance"
- "it feels like weight is taken off of me so i dont have to worry so much during the school year ."
- "Really exciting and makes me look forward to going to school even more"
- "I feel better with myself. I feel like now that I have everything I need, I'll feel better with going into the next school year."
- "It feels good knowing that I put in the work to catch up and now I have another chance to succeed"
- "It's motivating me to stay on track to not get left behind again"
- "I feel Awesome and Happyyy!!"
- "i feel better because i can get caught up in all my school work so i don't have to keep getting stuck on the same problems"

What suggestions do you have to improve the FLIGHT School experience?

- "I really don't know, make this an ongoing program"
- "nothing, the amount of students was amazing and the teachers were amazing. 10/10 program"
- "keep doing the extra support and style of teaching"
- "Nothing everything was great and very helpful shout out to all the teacher's.."
- "I have no suggestions I really like the way they run things at flight school"

The Correlation Between Teacher Behavior and Student Behavior

This program provided an opportunity to observe the impact of teacher behavior on the behavior of students who traditionally struggle with engagement and behavior. Typically struggling students make up either a small portion of a class, or struggle with attendance consistency. The attendance of students was excellent, which allowed for observations of the impact of teacher behavior on a student behavior to be more easily studied than during the school year. The observations made led to discussions with the staff on a day to day basis to improve learning outcomes for the students. It was discovered there was a much larger percentage of time during the day in which teacher behavior led to successful student habits.

The following are teacher behaviors observed when students were participating in “successful learning”.

Successful learning means : students were not distracted by phones or peers, and students provided depth of thinking in their work.

- Individually conferencing with students about where their skills are and what they need to do to improve.
- Interactive, hands on inquiry and student lead projects / assignments.
- Research inquiry projects that are student lead.
- Engage in learning and team building activities with the students.
- Teaching skills directly (like graphing or math) and making sure all students are practicing that skill.
- Check in and support students, even if they don't ask for help.
- Teachers are constantly moving and interacting with the students.
- If a phone is out, teachers sit with a student to refocus or to find out if this is a sign of an emotional problem. This is not to punish, it is to support. They call for additional support if the student asks for it.
- Group work (either a group project or individual project that they can discuss)
- Asking probing questions.
- Teachers identify students that are struggling, what they are struggling with, and intentionally support them.
- Teachers check in on how the kids are feeling, or ask a question to learn about the students before having a conversation about work ethic, phone issues, or need for improvement. (they actually care about the kid and not just the grade)
- Assignments are structured and have clear instructions and expectations.
- Limiting the amount of students out of the classroom at a time.
- Attendance and mastery are stressed as important by the teachers and a path to success is provided (reviewing mastery standards and how assignments align with those standards)
- Having positive, growth mindset conversations with the students.

The following are observed examples of teacher behavior that did not lead to successful learning habits of the students.

This means students were on their phones, socializing, or not providing depth of thinking to their work. *Note: these habits were not as common as the successful habits during this program.*

- When teachers are sitting at their own desk and not talking to students.
- When teachers allow down time when an assignment is completed. When a student believes they have completed their objective, they then do what they want instead of what the teacher wants.
- Talking to each other (when there are multiple adults in the room) instead of talking to the students.
- Not having objectives written on the board and criteria needed to meet the objectives readily available.
- Being underprepared, not having enough work for students.
- Self paced work for longer tasks without whole class review or reflections. Some students rush through without enough detail, and some move very slow to answer questions. This creates a classroom dynamic in which students are at wildly different spots and very few have answered the questions to the expected level because they are either moving too slow and have not completed the work OR they rushed through the work without providing enough depth of thinking. Either way, the desired result is not met.
- Watching long videos (more than 2-3 minutes) with no discussions, especially early in the day and in dark rooms.
- When a teacher lectures for more than a few minutes.
- Assignment expectations are not clear or posted.
- Allowing multiple students to leave the classroom at the same time.

Recommendations To Continue To Do In This Program

- Later starting time (9:00am)
- Strict attendance policy with follow up phone call in the beginning of every day.
- Cohorting the groups of students.
- A review of behavioral and attendance expectations in the beginning of the program to staff and students.
- An emphasis on team building and getting to know each other in the early stages.
- Keep the lessons project based and inquiry driven.
- All classes are in 1 hallway
- Limited to no “down” time
- Meeting individually with students to review progress.
- If students are not reaching standard, have them stay after for more individualized instruction.
- 4-5 adults teaching each class.
- Have snacks available for students.

Recommended Improvements To The Program

- Train the students on the standards they will be held to (go over the rubrics first)
- Provide an outline and review the big project students must accomplish early on in the program.

- Review successful teacher traits and unsuccessful teacher traits with the staff before the program begins to be on the same page for lesson expectations.
- Include more actionable student behaviors in the mastery rubrics.
- Before the program begins, ensure that each lesson aligns to specific standards on the rubrics.
- Teachers put the learning expectations on the board

Key Implications for Regular Education During The School Year

Setting High Expectations

There are several key implications to take away from this program. The first and most important is that students will reach or come close to reaching the expectations that are set for them. Students got in this position because of lower expectations. Struggling students are not told they need to excel, they are told they need to get a 60, or to do the bare minimum. They are told they have to be at school every day, but the reality is that this is not the true expectation that we hold them to because we do not call home the moment they are 5 minutes late to class. During this program the expectation was set for them to be great. There was no bare minimum with grades, they had to prove they mastered a standard. If a student was late, their family was called repeatedly until we got an answer or found a way to get them to school, because every day was important. The students were aware of the high expectations and they rose higher than they have in several years. ([slideshow](#))

Emphasizing Team Building

The role of team building cannot be overstated enough. Teachers often use an “ice breaker” to begin the school year, but then rush to the content with the mindset of “I can’t fall behind on what I am supposed to teach”. A possible result of this is that students, such as the students in this program, never feel comfortable and thus, disengage from learning. This results in these students never learning in school. This is the opposite of the intention of the teacher. What was discovered in the FLIGHT program is that these students will learn and engage in learning once they are comfortable in the room. The best way to get historically disengaged students to engage in learning is to repeatedly do team building activities. This shouldn’t be a one and done. This should be the first few lessons, and then embedded into group work throughout the year. ([some team building activities that were used](#))

Correctly Using SEL

The purpose of social emotional learning is for students to learn in a positive way that affirms their struggles and makes them feel comfortable. In school however, we tend to use social / emotional problems as an excuse for lowering learning expectations instead of allowing it to be a pathway towards learning. In this program, the adults listened to the students, they supported them and developed relationships bound out of respect, belief, and trust. Those relationships, and recognizing the struggles they were going through, were used to motivate the students to learn more, not to make excuses for failure.

Mastery Based Learning

When the standards based rubrics were explained to the students, it gave them a goal to accomplish. It gave them an attainable end goal for which the assignments were the path. The students were more successful in learning because they were aware of how they were supposed to demonstrate their knowledge. This also helped the teachers because they made sure all their assignments were aligned with the standards.

Culturally Relevant / Inquiry / Project Based Learning

Every lesson taught was a combination of these three teaching styles. By making the lessons culturally relevant, there was a personal draw or connection to learning. By making the lessons inquiry based, students were not given the answers as much as they were challenged to find the answers (a more worthwhile reason to use your brain), and they were project based to emphasize the power of collaboration and creating something of your own. These strategies or styles led to high levels of engagement, enjoyment, and learning, and students were more likely to be off of their cell phones and collaborating with their peers.

Cell Phones

Many schools are adopting a no cell phone policy, or are having legitimate discussions about removing cell phones from the classroom. Cellphones are a problem. They have become a lifeline and an escape from stress and anxiety. They provide access to social media and to every video, movie, or tv show imaginable. When a student is on their phone in class, it's typically either a sign of an emotional problem that should be addressed, or a sign that they are bored. At the FLIGHT program, cell phones were discouraged, but cell phones were not taken from students. The teachers were challenged to make lessons so engaging that students would want to do school work rather than be on their phones. There is a misconception with this. Teachers complain that they can never be as exciting as a tv show a kid is watching. That is true. What we found at during this program is that the lessons don't have to be that exciting, but if they are a challenge, or about a real life problem, or something hands on, students will do the work rather than be on the phone because it isn't boring. To reduce the cell phone use in schools, lessons don't have to be Netflix productions, but they can't be boring or monotonous. Students want to accomplish something or get something out of it. An example : anybody can easily watch a video and answer predetermined questions (what did the scientist say is the reason why the Earth has seasons). This isn't a challenge, so the students get distracted. It becomes a challenge if a teacher asks a student to model why they think the Earth has seasons. It becomes a worthwhile mental task.

Attendance Phone Calls

By making phone calls for potential attendance issues early and often, it became clear to the students that every day is important. There was too much to learn for a student to stay home. Attendance is something school staff members always point towards being important, but even when told this, maybe the message isn't received as intended by the students or parents. At FLIGHT school, parents and students were aware of how important attending every day was, so students attended more regularly.

Growth Mindset

All conversations with students centered around growth. The leaders of the program gave motivational, growth mindset speeches to set the tone in the beginning of the program. Students were constantly asked to reflect on their growth, on their mastery of learning and as a person during this program. If a student was struggling, it was viewed as a skill deficit and the staff worked to build the missing skill. If a student's work did not reach standard, they were told why it wasn't, what they needed to do, and then they were given time and a chance to improve their work. The adults in the program believed in the students and made that belief clear to all of the students. This positive growth mindset eliminated the stress of failure and made it a focus on improving and learning.

Habits Of Successful Teaching

It is highly recommended that teachers make their best efforts to engage in teaching behaviors that were found to be associated with students completing more work and being on task much more often. It might not be possible to fill every moment of a class period with these identified habits, but by emphasizing the habits that led to more success, there is likely to be more time in which students do well and are engaged in learning.

SRBI

This program is essentially an SRBI Tier 2 Program, and at times, Tier 3. Students were given much more individualized attention (3 students per teacher) and supported in skill development and task management. When it was found certain students struggled to reach mastery in this set-up, they entered Tier 3 by staying after school, coming on an off day, or working with one of the administrators one on one. The growth in each standard was tracked and the teachers worked towards improving the students in the standards they struggled. While there are a lot of emotional supports for students in the high school, there is limited learning supports. Developing an SRBI protocol with the support staff and teachers can improve student learning outcomes, as was made evident through the targeted intervention in this program.

Future Credit Recovery Programs

By making this credit recovery program mastery based and project based, it ensured that students invested their time into learning and attaining skills to be successful. It is recommended that future credit recovery programs follow a similar pattern. Currently the schools runs a credit recovery program in the 4th quarter for freshman called DAPS. Students are asked to redo between 1 and 5 assignments until their grade reaches a 60% for the first semester. This mindset leads to an emphasis of completion over mastery, which does not guarantee future success. In addition, this sets the acceptable level of success at a 60%, which, on a mastery based based scale, is not accepted for being considered to have "mastered" the skill. By switching future credit recovery programs to be mastery and inquiry driven, learning is more likely to happen.

Flexible Start Times

This is something that could become a solution down the road. Many students attributed their success, at least partially, to the 9:00am start time. Research has been out for decades that high school aged students brains do not function as well earlier in the morning. The students said this later starting time allowed them enough time to wake up and get to school. They also had more energy when coming in.

Starting school later is probably never going to be a district-wide solution because of the timing with other schools, the timing of transportation, and the timing of athletics. That does not mean, however, that a later starting and ending time isn't possible for some students. What if certain teachers and students elected for later times. Instead of their school day going from 7:30am to 2:00pm, it goes from 9:30am to 4:00pm? The students would be paired with teachers who preferred the late start time for the late afternoon classes. Again, this would not be a whole school solution, but if classes starting at 7:30am instead of 9:30am is going to be the difference between graduating or not, it's worth a shot. College schedules and most professional schedules have flexibility with starting times, maybe it's time students and teachers got that flexibility as well.