



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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TOPIC

ACHS Credit Recovery and Academic Flexibility

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

ACPS only offers credit recovery during a rigid four week summer window with strict deadlines, locked gradebooks, and counselor managed registration. Students who work, have family obligations, or miss deadlines are left with no path forward. This affects working students, immigrant families, students with disabilities, and low income students the most. When students cannot recover credits, they fall futher behind, stress builds up, mental healh suffers and graduation becomes uncertain. Making credit recovery more accessible and raising awarness would help students catch up sooner and avoid the pressure of trying to recover everythign last minute.

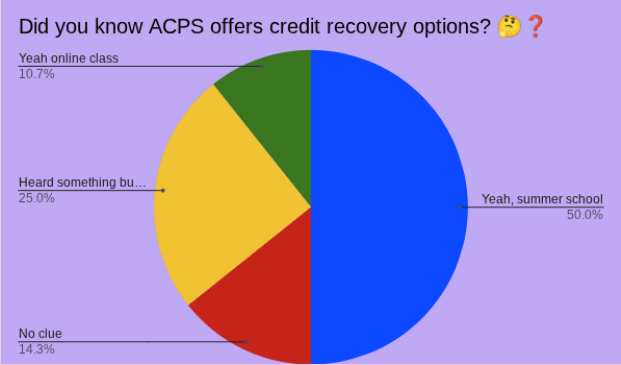
BASELINE DATA & GOAL

My survey of 25 ACHS students found that 76% said they would use a flexible credit recovery option, but 28% had no clue or little knowledge about its existence. I want to increase student awarness of credit recover options from 72% to 90%, increase the percentage of students successfully using credit recovery before senior year from under 40% to atleast 60%.

CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

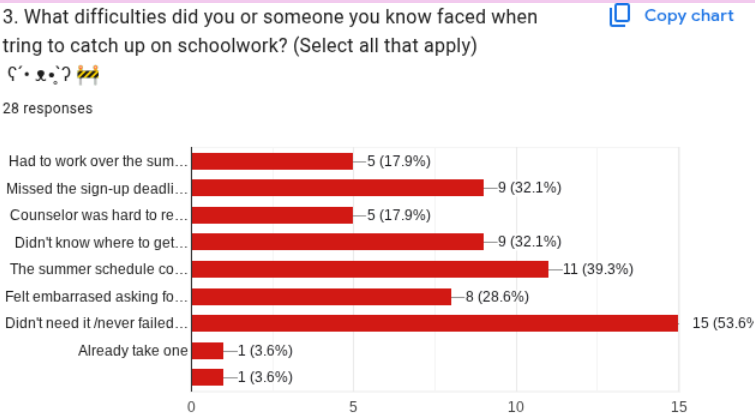
The CYCP states that all students should have access to resources that help them succeed academically and feel supported by their school. My project focuses on credit recovery more accessible and raising awareness so students can use it before they fall too far behind. This is the exact support that helps struggling studeents stay engaged and graduate instead of dropping out.

WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

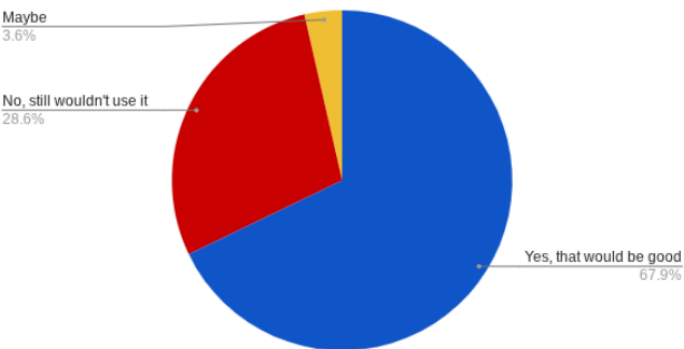


Only 50% of students knew about summer school credit recovery. Just 10.7% knew about online classes. 39.3% of students are unaware of options that could help them graduate. If students don't know options exist, they can't use them. They fall behind and drop out as a result.

The biggest barrier is summer schedule conflicting with family plans (11 students, 39.3%). Missing sign-up deadlines and not knowing where to get help (32.1%). These are problems, not laziness. Schools shouldn't assume everone student has a free summer and easy access.



Would you use a credit recovery option that was available during the school year (after school or online at your own pa...



67.9% said yes, they would use credit recovery if it was after school or online at their own pace. Only 28.6% said no and 3.6% said maybe. This matters because students want flexibility. The demand is there. ACPS just needs to supply it.

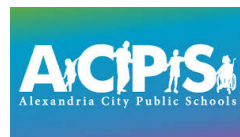
WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

ACPS offers free summer credit recovery from June 22 to July 16. They also have online learning program, 24/7 Canvas tutoring and SOL Remediation programs. The city provides fare-free DASH buses to help students get to summer programs. Liberty's Promise supports immigrant youth, and LINK club offers afterschool tutoring. These resources exist, but they are either summer-limited or require counselor approval that creates delays.

WHO CAN HELP?

ACPS Instructional Support: Can change policy, fund programs, and academic support.

Liberty's Promise: Can advocate for working students and pusg for flexible options.



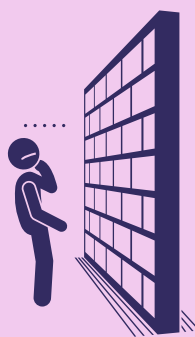
WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

ACPS created summer credit recovery, online options through Online Learning Program, Saturday school, tutoring and Equity for All Dashboard tracks outcomes. These actions are not working well,. The Titan Changemaker data shows teacher retention dropped to 85%, students feel staff “give up on kids easily,” and onyl 64% feel ACPS sets high expectation. My survey found that 76% want flexible options, but 7 missed deadlines, 8 had family conflicts and 5 had to work. A 10th grader said, “I didn’t know where to get help.” Another said, “The sumer schedule conflicted with my family plans.” The system looks good on paper or online but fails in practice.



IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

No. People are not better off. The problem is staying the same ot getting worse. My survey shows only 42.9% of students agree ACPS gives enough second chances, while 28.6% said “kinda, not really” and 14.3% said “no, not at all.” Students reported mental health struggles, sleep loss, and feeling “really stresses and bad about themeselves.” One student said, “It affects mental health negatively; last time I had build of NHIs, I couldn’t and wouldn’t get sleep.” The current system is making things worse, not better.



WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

ACPS should make existing credit recovery options more accessible and raise student awarness before they fall too far behind. Three changes would help. First, more communication about credit recovery options early in the school year, not just when students are already failing. Second, extending registration deadlines and reduce strict attendance rules so working students and those with family obligations can actually participate. Third, train counselors to proactively reach out to struggling students instead of waiting the students to find them. My survey supports this solution. When I asked if they knew about credit recovery, 39.3% of students had no clue about it. When I asked what barriers they faced, 32.1% didn’t know where to get help or missed the deadline. Despite students saying they don’t know where to get help, or had a hard time reaching counselors, 67.9% said they would use flexible options if it is available. So, ACPS just needs to communicate better, remove barriers and make counselors more accessible so students catch up early instead of struggling on senior year.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If ACPS makes credit recovery more accessible and raises awarness, more students will catch up before senior year. Students will feel less stresses and more supported. The school will see better graduation rates and smaller equity gaps. The community benefits when more students graduate and become stable adults.

CITATIONS

CACHS. (2026). ACHS Credit Recovery & Academic Flexibility Survey. Google Docs. [Survey Link](#)

Online Learning Program - Alexandria City Public Schools. (2025). K12.Va.us [ACPS program link](#)

Session, L. (2020). Titan Changemaker Listening Session Handout.docx. Google Docs. [Handout Link](#)

Promotion, Retention & Remediation - Alexandria City Public Schools. (2025). K12.Va.us. [remediation link](#)

WANT TO LEARN MORE

Equity for All 2025 Dashboard - Alexandria City Public Schools. (2025). K12.Va.us. [Dashboard link](#) -This helps because it tracks which student groups are falling behind.

Session, L. (2020). Titan Changemaker Listening Session Handout.docx. Google Docs. [Handout Link](#) -This helps because it contains dirext student voices about what is working or not at ACHS.