Reimagining Credit Recovery
By Sweta Patel

The National Center for Education Statistics reports that in 2019, two million students dropped out of high school. I can identify a number of reasons why students choose to drop out… but at the end of the day, as an educator, I want to focus on effecting change for the reasons that are in my control.

At our alternative school, students often report low motivation because they're already so behind in credits. At a certain point, many assume a "why should I even bother" mentality. To help create hope while also maintaining the integrity of our academic standards, we are currently experimenting with an in-school, non computer-based credit recovery system.

This year, we squeezed in an extra period into our school day (a 7th hour). During this time, we are offering "credit recovery labs" in the four core areas - English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students who failed a previous English class, for example, can enroll in the English Lab. When they first enter a lab, students learn about the process they will follow to recover credit in that content area. The lab teachers identify the class that the student failed, at what percentage, and then read through feedback and recommendations provided by the original classroom teacher.

The lab teacher and the student, together, form a credit recovery plan based on the students' interests and missed standards. Once the plan is fulfilled, students can move into another needed lab. Students *do not* have to remain in the lab the entire quarter… They only have to remain long enough to accomplish mutually agreed upon goals. This process is very different from what we typically see in the educational system. Students who have failed a course are usually required to retake the entire course (despite having completed some work and meeting some standards during the first attempt). With this system, we are acknowledging the learning that was accomplished and are only trying to fill in the gaps.

Within this system, students are able to meaningfully and efficiently recover credit in failed classes with a classroom teacher. When speaking with students in my English lab this year, they feel the labs have given them hope again. Looking around my classroom, you might see one student reading a self-selected book and working on close reading strategies. Another student might be working on creating a Google Slides presentation around toxic relationships, preparing to deliver it to the health class. And yet another might

have a Chromebook in hand, drafting a short story for feedback. My role is to identify students' interests, learning gaps, and help create a personalized learning plan. When students complete the plan, I ask the counselor to identify the next lab or class the student can go to… and this might be three weeks into the quarter or six. There is no one start/end time for every student because every student's plan is different; it's a fluid and flexible system. Many of our lab students are able to recover a half credit in one quarter… And that's hope.

As we move forward with this experiment, we're hoping to develop a more efficient system to identify missed standards. This will require that all content area teachers come together and identify prioritized learning standards for each class, quarter by quarter. If a student were to fail a course during a certain quarter, with established learning standards, lab teachers would be able to more quickly work with the original classroom teacher to identify the gaps. Our math department is very strong in this area. Here is an example of the Math Lab teacher's personalized plan for a student to recover Geometry credit.

Name:	Date: 9/09/21		Subject: Geometry Q1		
Pre-Assessment results	**Each Learning Goal**	**Where Am I now**	**Where I will focus on to learn and grow**	**Where I want to end up**	
	Stating the goal in their own words helps students earn the goals in a powerful way	*This is the baseline, the starting point from which growth will be assessed.*	*Students identify specifically what they will do to get to their goal; concrete steps to follow, learning behaviors to target, or minigoals to keep in mind.*	*The vision of success statements go here.*	
Goal 1:	Better attendance				
Goal 2:	Better Grades/Catch up on credits				
Goal 3:	Have a less stressful year				
Goal 4: (From Mrs. Hasz)	Ask more questions!				
Standards to Complete:					
1	1-1 Points, Lines and Planes	☑			
2	1-2 Measuring and Constructing Segments	☑			
3	1-3 Measuring and Constructing Angles	☑			
4	1-4 Pairs of Angles	☑			
5	1-5 Using Forumulas in Geometry	☑			
6	3-2 Angles Formed by Parallel Lines	☑			
7	1-6 Midpoint and Distance in the Coordinate plane	☐			

We hope to continue to shape our in person, teacher-led credit recovery system at our school through collaboration among the lab teachers, content area classroom teachers, students, and our counselor. We will refine the processes for identifying students who need a lab, tracking students who move from lab to lab, and the communication between lab teachers and the original classroom

teachers. This is our shared mission: to help students recover credit in a meaningful, purposeful way (with academic integrity) that creates hope and lowers our dropout rate.