

# Research Brief

Greater Houston Community Foundation  
and Houston Independent School District (HISD)

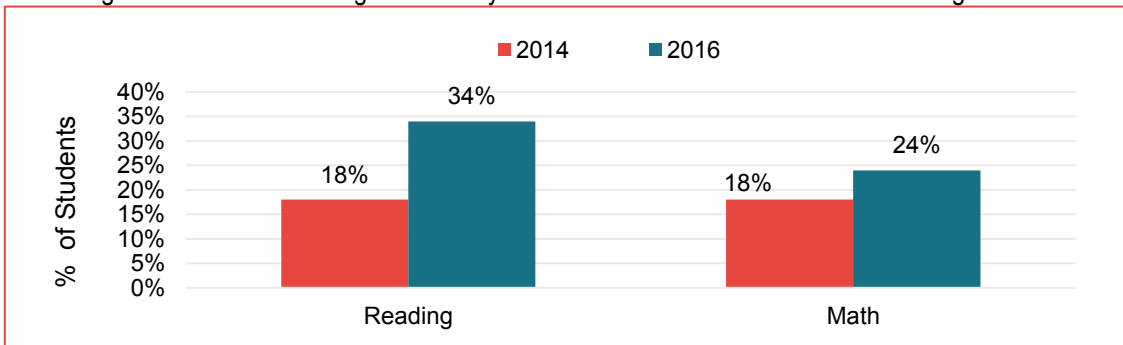
HOUSTON, TEXAS

## Edgenuity Courseware accelerates HISD middle school students' achievement

From 2013 to 2016, the Greater Houston Community Foundation and Houston Independent School District (HISD) launched the Learn Engage Advance Persevere (LEAP) program to address the needs of middle school students most at risk of dropping out of school. As part of this program, Edgenuity online courses were offered to overage 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students at Edison and Jackson Middle Schools who needed targeted intervention support. An independent research firm, Safal Partners, studied changes in STAAR Reading and Math test scores, discipline, and grade retention by Edgenuity users during the 2013, 2014, and 2015 school years.

### After two years of Edgenuity, students make significant gains on Texas STAAR Reading and Math tests

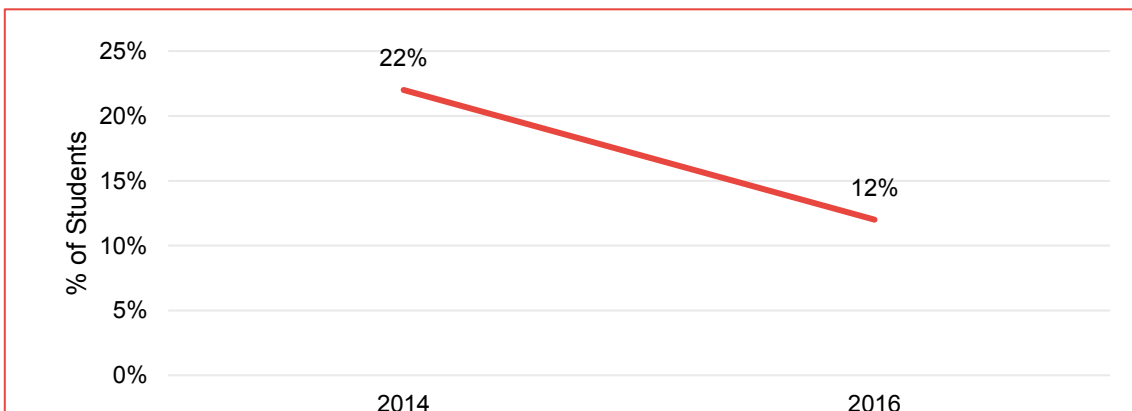
Figure 1. Houston Independent School District Edgenuity Students, Grades 6, 7, 8, (N=250)  
Percentage of Students Achieving Satisfactory Performance Level on the STAAR Reading and Math Tests, 2014 and 2016



Data were collected from students who took the spring STAAR Reading and Math tests in 2014 and 2016. Findings showed that the percentage of students performing at the Satisfactory Performance Level nearly doubled (from 18 percent to 34 percent).

### Suspension Rates Significantly Decline for At-risk Students

Figure 2. Houston Independent School District Edgenuity Students, Grades 6, 7, 8, (N=250)  
Percentage of Students that Were Suspended Six or More Days, 2014 and 2016



Two years of Edgenuity use contributed to improved behavioral outcomes. In 2014, 22 percent of Edgenuity students were suspended for six or more days. This figure dropped to 12 percent in 2016.

## Grade retention sores for Edgenuity students

Figure 3. Houston Independent School District Edgenuity Students, Grades 6, 7, 8, (N=250)  
Number of Students Who Skipped a Grade in the 2013, 2014, and 2015 School Years

	EDISON			JACKSON		
	School Year					
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Total # of Edgenuity students who skipped a grade	33	46	43	13	65	32
Total # of Students who were enrolled in Edgenuity	111	115	58	41	82	41
<b>Percent of Edgenuity</b> Percentage of students who skipped a grade	<b>30%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>78%</b>

Grade retention is linked to both dropout rates and lower life outcomes. Safal Partners calculated the number of students who skipped a grade in both Jackson and Edison Middle Schools over the three program years. Figure 3 shows the total number and percentage of students in Edgenuity who skipped a grade. At Jackson Middle School, 78 percent of Edgenuity students skipped a grade in 2015-16 and 79 percent skipped the year before. In Edison Middle School, 74 percent of Edgenuity students skipped a grade in 2015-16.

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“When Sophia enrolled in Edgenuity at Edison, she had behavioral issues that were impeding her learning and participation in class. Most notably, she had severe attitude problems, including being very confrontational with her teachers and classmates. When she was promoted from 6th to 7th grade midyear, her teachers noticed a drastic improvement in her demeanor and attitude. Sophia recalls this moment as ‘changing her life’ because it taught her that her effort could produce results. She commented that it was especially freeing to come out of the identity of being behind a year. She continues performing well academically and was accepted to a magnet program in the city.

– Interview with Safal Partners

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