

# FFY 2015 SOAR Act Funding Proposal



Stakeholder Feedback Session  
August 17, 2015



# AGENDA

Overview of the SOAR Act  
SOAR Act Application Process and Timeline  
OSSE's Commitment for FFY15 SOAR Act  
Trends and Changes from FFY14  
FFY15 Application Funding Proposal  
Proposed Funding Priorities  
Application Review Process  
Award Process  
Timeline and Next Steps  
Questions

# Overview of the SOAR Act

- The Scholarships for Opportunity and Results (SOAR) Act, Pub. L. 112-10, 125 Stat. 199, is a federal law that authorizes funding for three DC education sectors – traditional public schools, public charter schools and private schools (through tuition vouchers).
- SOAR Act funds are appropriated by Congress and provided to the District of Columbia through the U.S. Department of Education (ED). DC and ED are required to enter into an agreement to monitor and evaluate the use of all SOAR funds, including those SOAR funds reserved for DCPS and the Opportunity Scholars Program.
- For the charter sector, SOAR authorizes funding “to improve and expand quality public charter schools in the District of Columbia.” § 3004(b)(2).

# SOAR Act Application Process

- Each year, OSSE's Office of Public Charter School Financing and Support (OPCSFS) submits an application to ED describing how it will administer the charter sector funds.
- OSSE seeks and reviews stakeholder feedback before submitting the application.
- Upon approving the application, ED releases the funds to OSSE.
- OSSE subgrants the funds to charter LEAs and non-profit charter support organizations.

# SOAR Act Application Timeline

## Last Year:

- FFY2014 application submitted to ED on 8/22/14.
- ED did not approve the application and issue a Grant Award Notice (GAN) to OSSE until 3/31/15.
- OSSE Request for Applications issued 5/1/15.
- Subgrant awards were made in July 2015.

## This Year:

- OSSE is seeking stakeholder input until 8/22/15.
- OSSE's application is due to ED on 9/1/15.

# OSSE's Commitment

- Fund projects with the highest potential for LEA academic improvement.
- Evaluate projects in accordance with the SOAR Act guidelines.
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders.
- Support an innovative approach to school improvement based on LEA needs.
- Reduce administrative burden on LEAs.
- Provide support to new charter schools.

# Overall Funding Reduction

- Congressional funding for SOAR has decreased every year.
- In the first year (FFY 12), the budget was \$20 million.
- In FFY 13, the budget was \$18.95 million.
- Last year (FFY 14) it was \$16 million.
- Next year (FFY 15) it will be \$15 million.

# Trends from Prior Competition

- Most Competitive Grant Competitions
  - Academic Quality (12 of 29 projects funded)
  - Public Facilities (6 of 19 funded)
  - Third Party (6 of 11 funded)
- Least Competitive Grant Competition
  - Replication & Growth (11\* of 12 funded)
    - \* representing 4 LEAs



# Overview of Proposed Changes


Based on decreased funding and trends from last year:

- Increase Academic Quality Budget
- Increase Public Facilities Budget
- Redesign Replication & Growth Grant
- Tier Availability of Third-Party Grants
- Eliminate Direct Loan Fund Infusion
- Maintain Early Childhood Formula Grant

# FFY15 Application to ED: Budget Proposal

Purpose of Funds	Amount Proposed
Academic Quality Grants	\$6,000,000.00
Early Childhood Grants	\$603,314.34
Public Facilities Grants	\$4,000,000.00
Best Practice Dissemination Grants (formerly Replication & Growth)	\$1,236,685.66
Grants to Charter-Support Organizations	\$2,250,000.00
Administration	\$910,000.00
Total	\$15,000,000.00

Direct  
funding  
to LEAs



# Academic Quality: Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
<b>Budget</b>	\$ 5,281,907	\$ 6,000,000
<b>Required Project Elements</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designed to have a direct and rapid impact on student achievement,</li> <li>2. Research-based, and</li> <li>3. Aligned with at least one ESEA flexibility principle.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Designed to have a direct and rapid impact on student achievement, and</li> <li>2. Research-based.</li> </ol>
<b>Priority Areas</b>	<p>“Guiding Strategies” around Student Achievement, Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment, Instructional Support, Graduation Pathways, Extended Learning Time, Out-of-School-Time Programs, and Expanding Capacity and/or Infrastructure</p>	<p>Projects aligned with needs identified in the ESEA Flexibility Waiver and the State Systemic Improvement Plan, including: improving achievement and graduation rates for ELL students and special education students (including satellite classrooms), STEM, and reducing achievement &amp; equity gaps between subgroups of students.</p>

# Early Childhood: No Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
Budget	\$ 785,093	\$ 603,314
Eligibility	Based on Title I eligibility formula.	Based on Title I eligibility formula.

# Public Facilities: Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
Budget	\$ 3,871,790	\$ 4,000,000
Eligibility	LEAs leasing former District (including DCPS) buildings.	Expand eligibility to also include charter schools seeking to renovate facilities that are owned by the charter school, provided that SOAR-funded assets are transferred to successor LEAs or OSSE, as appropriate, if a LEA relinquishes or loses its charter.

# Replication & Growth: Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
<b>Budget</b>	\$ 1,000,000	\$1,236,686
<b>Raise Subgrant Amounts</b>	Up to \$ 100,000 per campus; eligible to apply in 3 consecutive years (planning + implementation)	Up to \$250,000 per LEA per year for 3 years to expand <u>and</u> support best practice dissemination to a lower-performing school
<b>Repurpose Grant Program</b>	Expanding high quality charter LEAs were provided funds to expand their own campuses.	Expanding high quality charter LEAs will be provided higher grant awards to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand to a new campus; and</li> <li>2. Create a demonstration site / best practice dissemination project.</li> </ol>

# Charter Support Organizations: Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
<b>Budget</b>	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,250,000
<b>Key Required Project Elements</b>	Successful projects will have a direct and rapid (within two years) impact on overall charter school academic achievement or on the achievement of historically under-performing subgroups.	Emphasize the requirement to have a direct and rapid impact on school-level achievement through differential award availability.
<b>Broaden Impact</b>	Highest ranked applications were fully-funded until funds were expended. Majority requested maximum available funds.	Lower maximum funds available.
<b>Tiered Awards</b>	All applicants eligible to apply for up to \$500,000.	Prioritized tiers will be created so that direct assistance providers may receive more funding.

# Direct Loan: Proposed Changes

	FFY 14 (Last Year)	FFY 15 (Proposed)
<b>Budget</b>	Add \$ 2,000,000 to the direct loan/credit enhancement	No funds added.
<b>Rationale for Change</b>	<p>Based on projections, there are sufficient DL/CE funds projected to be replenished by repayment and CE expiration to meet current demand. However, we will seek other sources of funding for continued support of the fund, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Charter Schools Program: We requested \$1,824,705.88 in our Charter Schools Program (CSP, Title V-B) application. Awards will be announced in September.</li> <li>o Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program and State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants: With the support of the charter school sector, we will consider applying for these grants as they are made available by ED.</li> </ul>	



# Proposed Funding Priorities

- **Improving Academic Achievement and Graduation Rates for ELL Students and Students with Disabilities**
  - Alignment with ESEA Waiver and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)
  - Satellite classrooms
  - Specific category for this focus area
- **Overall Student Achievement**
  - Use of assessment data to identify students who need remediation
    - Categorize by Grade, Subject, and/or Special Populations
    - Focus on STEM
    - Focus on reduction of achievement/equity gaps between subgroups

# Proposed Funding Priorities

- **Instructional Support**
  - Curriculum Development
  - Data-Driven Instruction
  - Improved Culture and Climate
  - Turnaround Models
  
- **Additional Graduation Pathways**
  - Credit Recovery
  - Accelerated Opportunities
  - Second Chance Programs

# Proposed Funding Priorities

- **Teacher and Leader Quality and Recruitment**
  - Principal & School Leader Recruitment/Retention
  - Teacher Recruitment/Retention
    - Effective evaluation systems
    - Teacher residency programs
  - Quality Professional Learning & Development (PD)

# Application Review Process

- All grants competitive (*except Early Childhood Education Grant*)
- Sent to three external, independent reviewers
  - Reviewers submit a resume and complete an application
  - Trained in EGMS and application review
  - Certify no conflict of interest exists
- Review panel convened to conduct a facilitated meeting if a wide variance in scores exists
- Average of all three scores taken
- Average score used to rank applications from highest to lowest

# Award Process

- OPCSFS staff review all scores
- Superintendent, or her designee, makes final decision on all awards
  - Based on OSSE priorities
  - Fully fund or partially fund applications
- OPCSFS makes awards in EGMS

# Reducing Administrative Burden

- Application Completed Through EGMS
- Coordinated Monitoring of all School Improvement Efforts
  - Alignment to other school improvement strategies (SIG, Title I, RTTT, etc.)
  - Differentiated monitoring based on OSSE's monitoring policy
- Comprehensive Approach to School Improvement

# Timeline and Next Steps

## Timeline for Application Submission

- August 17, 2015: Stakeholder feedback session
- August 21, 2015: Deadline additional written feedback
- September 1, 2015: OSSE application due to ED

## **\* Estimated Timeline/Subject to ED Approval Timeline**

- December 2015: Funding available from ED\*
- January 2016: Release of NOFA and RFA\*
- March 2016: LEA applications due to OSSE\*
- April 2016: Awards to LEAs & support organizations\*

# Questions?





# Contact Information

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