



Agency Priority Goal (APG) Action Plan

Improve the Access to and the Quality and Transparency of School Choice Options for K-12 students

APG Goal Leader: Chris Rinkus, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Evidence-based Practices and State and Grantee Relations, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE)

APG Deputy Goal Leader: Ellen Safranek, Director of the Charter Schools Program, OESE

Overview

Goal Statement

- By September 30, 2019, the Charter School Program (CSP) will support the creation and expansion of 300 new charter schools nationally. The CSP will also support the enrollment of 50,000 students in new charter schools. Additionally, by September 30, 2019, the Department will disseminate eight resources, at least one per quarter, on evidence-based and promising practices related to school choice.

Challenge

- Charter school authorizers to provide more monitoring and technical assistance to both existing and new charter schools.
- Charter school expansion may be limited by State and local laws and policies.
- A misunderstanding of the public nature of charter schools may impact the opening of and increased enrollment in charter schools.

Opportunity

- Increasing the number of new charter schools nationally and the number of students enrolled in charter schools will provide opportunities for educational alternatives and choices that will better prepare students for the 21st century.
- Increasing public and private school choices that empower parents, local communities, and students to achieve their educational goals and career ambitions, which includes being more transparent about school choice opportunities.

Leadership

Chris Rinkus, Goal Leader

Ellen Safranek, Deputy Goal Leader

Goal Structure & Strategies

The Department will:

- Conduct Charter School Program (CSP) grant competitions to award new grants to entities such as State Entities (SE) and Charter Management Organizations (CMOs).
- Monitor and provide technical assistance to grantees and review grantee performance reports for information on the creation and expansion of new charter schools and increased student enrollment.
- Determine the net new schools and student enrollment by comparing grantee reported data with the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data.
- Work closely with Department-funded National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) in preparation of evidence-based and promising practices resources.

Summary of Progress – FY 2019 Q4

- The *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) focuses on strengthening authorizer practices and increased accountability. This has resulted in more authorizers reviewing applicants with greater scrutiny as well as improved monitoring activities.
- CSP incorporated rural priorities into its FY 2019 Developer* competition. 357 CSP-funded charter schools (roughly 10% of all CSP-funded charter schools) were open in school year 2017-18 in rural locales.
- The number of charter schools that can open, and the requirements around opening, are determined at the State and local level. During FY 2019, several States have seen change in political leadership which resulted in either moratoriums/caps on charter school development (e.g. California) or changes to the flow of funds.

*Developer: Developer Grants for the Opening of New Charter Schools and for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools

Summary of Progress – FY 2018 through FY 2019

- During FY 2018-2019, the [CSP](#) administered seven grant programs, performing activities such as rule making, publishing Notices Inviting Applicants (NIA), administering competitions, awarding funds, post award support, and monitoring grantees.
- Program officers conducted monthly monitoring calls to review and discuss the grantee implementation progress, conducted site visits, and provided technical support.
- The Department shared best practices with the school choice community such as through webinars on oversight of charter management organizations (CMO), Dear College letters for performing monitoring, and mitigation procedures related to charter school contractual relationships with CMOs.

The Department achieved this APG in part. By September 30, 2019, the Department:

- Supported a total of 337 schools new, expanded, or replicated charter schools nationally (134 in FY 2018 and 203 in FY 2019), compared to the target of 300 schools;
- Supported the net increase in enrollment of 68,547 students in charter schools. The target was 50,000 new students in CSP-funded charter schools. By the end of the 2018-2019 school year, the number of students enrolled in CSP-funded charter schools was 1,624,564; the number of students enrolled in CSP-funded charter schools in the 2016-2017 school year was 1,556,017.
- Disseminated eight resources on evidence-based and promising practices related to school choice, compared to the target of eight resources, one per quarter.
- Five resources were released in FY 2018. Three resources were released in FY 2019: [*Presenting School Choice Information to Parents: An Evidence-Based Guide*](#), [*Do Charter Middle Schools Improve Students' College Outcomes?*](#), and [*Evaluation of the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program: Impacts After Three Years*](#).

Key Milestones

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Milestone Owner	Comments
Establish timelines for preparation of resources with Charter School Program (CSP) contractor	Q2 2018	Completed	CSP Director	CSP continues to pursue a plan to develop disseminate resources on evidence-based and promising practices related to school choice.
Publish Notices Inviting Applications (NIA) for new grants	Q3 2018	Completed	CSP Director	<p>The Charter Management Organization (CMO) program, a notice of proposed priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria were published.</p> <p>The CMO notice of final priority (NFP) and NIA published in November 2018 and were awarded in March 2019.</p>

Key Milestones

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Milestone Owner	Comments
Release first set of resources	Q4 2018	Completed	CSP Director	<p>CSP conducted a kickoff meeting with the Department’s contractor on the profiles of best practices related to charter schools, charter school authorizing, and charter management organizations.</p> <p>In July, CSP awarded a new National Charter School Resource Center contract despite full implementation being delayed as a result of a contract challenge through July 2019.</p>
Award new grants	Q1 2019	Completed	CSP Director	CSP regulated on its CMO program and Credit Enhancement Program during Quarter 1.
Award grants	Q2 2019	Completed	CSP Director	CSP competed and awarded FY 2018 CMO grant awards. FY 2018 CMO funds were not due to be awarded until March FY 2019. CSP also made FY 2019 State Entity grant awards.

Key Milestones

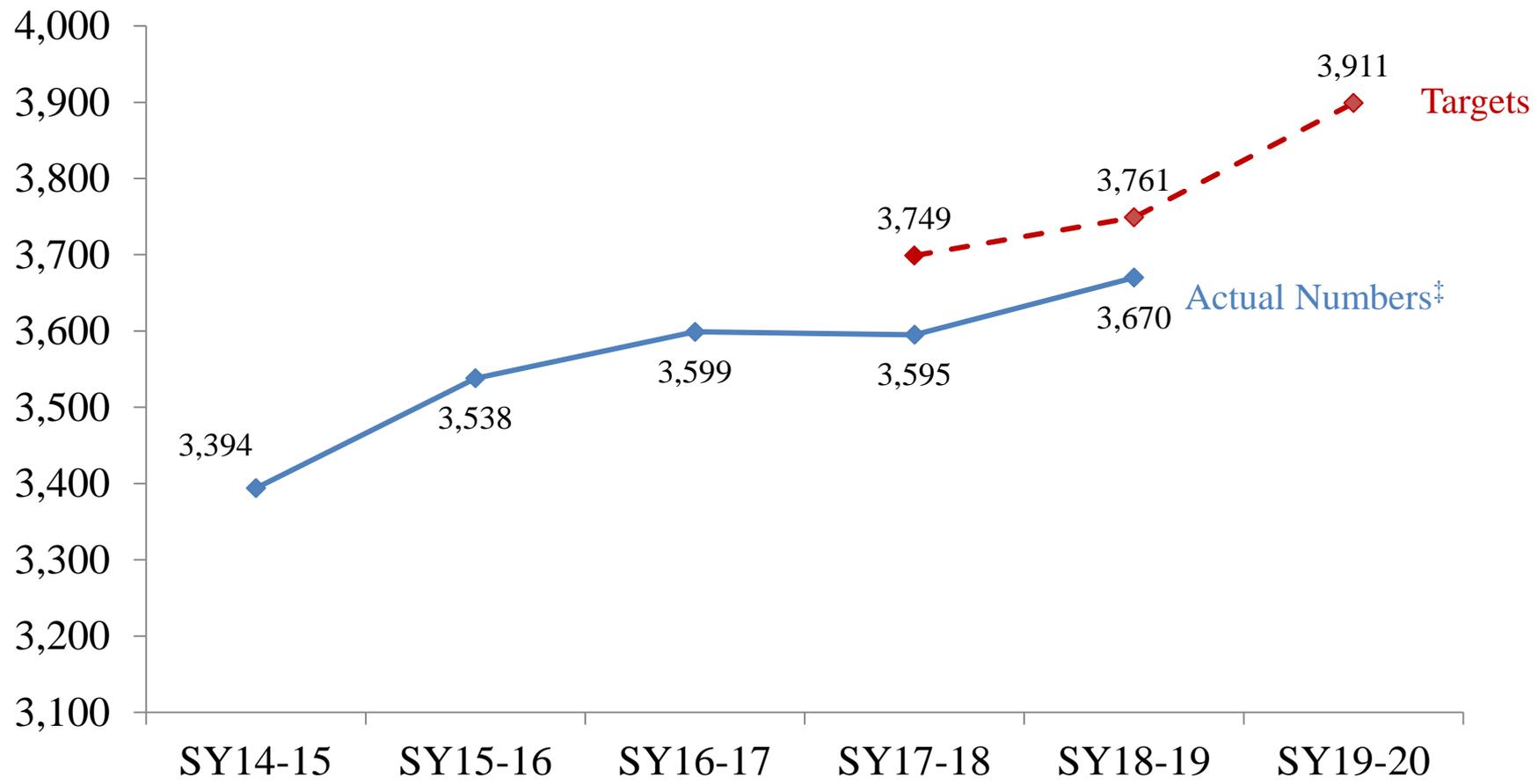
Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Milestone Owner	Comments
Publish Notices Inviting Applications (NIA) for new grants	Q3 2019	Completed	CSP Director	CSP conducted rule making for its Developer grants for opening new charter schools as well as developed an NIA in order to run a FY 2019 Developer grant competition.
				CSP conducted rule making for its Credit Enhancement* grants as well as developed an NIA in order to run a FY 2019 Credit Enhancement grant competition.
				CSP developed a NIA for its State Incentive** grant program in order to run a FY 2019 competition
Release resources	Q4 2019	Completed	CSP Director	The Department released three resources in FY 2019 related to school choice.

*Credit Enhancement: Credit Enhancement for Charter School Facilities Program

**State Incentive: State Charter School Facilities Incentive Grants Program; State Entity: Expanding Opportunities Through Quality CSP Grants to State Entities.

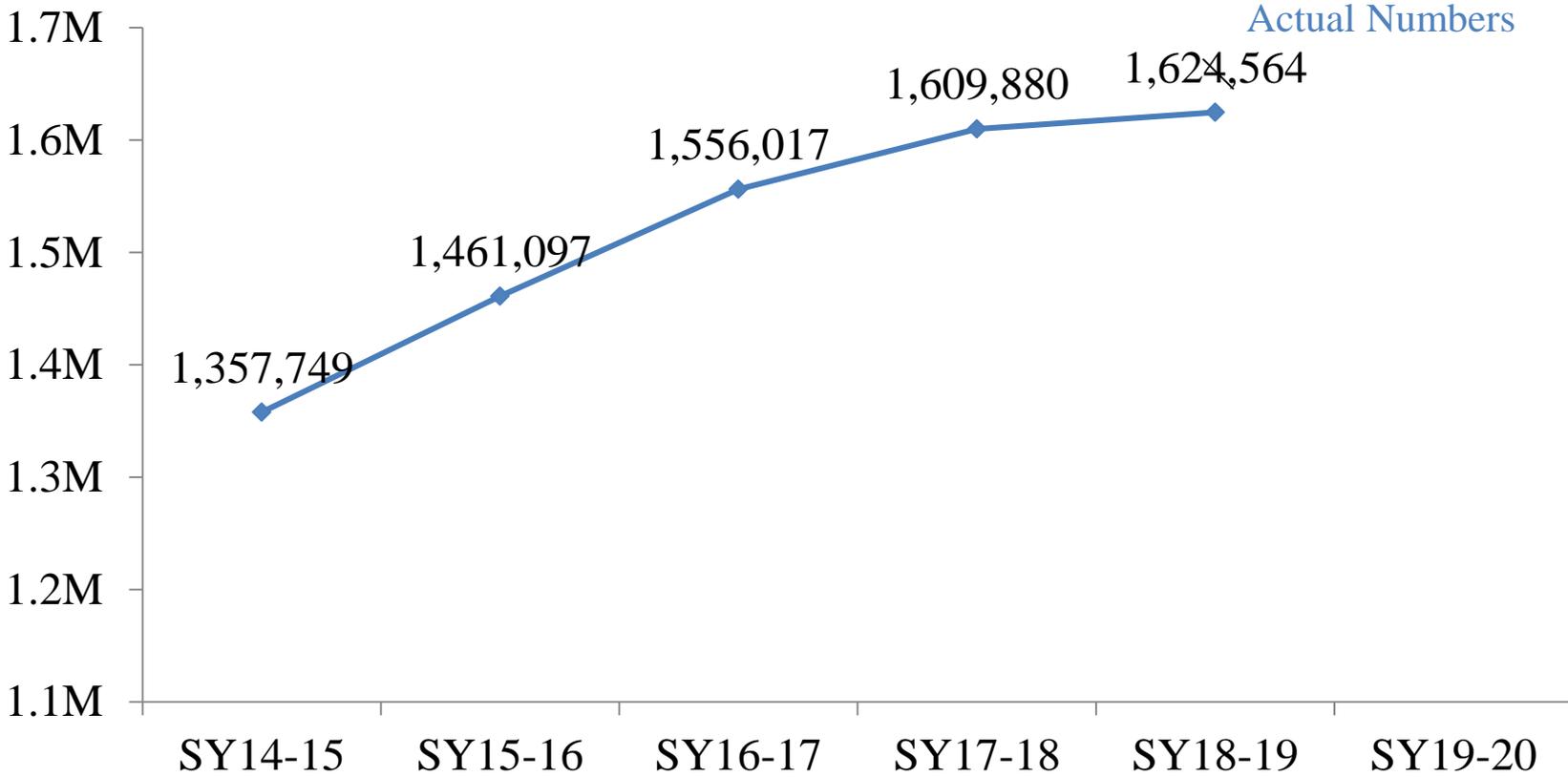
Key Indicators

Aggregate # of Open and Operating CSP-Funded Charter Schools



[‡] In SY 2017-18: 134 new, CSP-supported charter schools opened, and 101 charter schools expanded under a CSP grant.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics CCD (<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>) and Grantee Annual Performance Reports.

Key Indicators



Source: National Center for Education Statistics CCD (<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>) and Grantee Annual Performance Reports.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

- The data for open and operating charter schools and for students enrolled in charter schools derive from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD) and Charter School Program (CSP) grant annual performance reports (where schools are identified in the grant applications).
- The CSP team calculates the cumulative actual—using the self-reported data—in grantee annual performance reports and will provide the aggregated data for reporting.
- These data are compared to data in the NCES CCD (which includes a list of all charter schools, from which the CSP will identify which charter schools have received CSP funds).
- CSP staff verifies the data in annual performance reports with their grantees and with the CSP contractor, who will reconcile CSP-funded charter schools to the NCES CCD.
- CSP and NCES will reconcile and validate the data.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- Department of Education: Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) and Institute of Education Sciences, including National Center for Education Statistics
- Charter School Program Grantees
- State Educational Agencies and State Authorizers
- Charter Management Organizations

Program Activities:

- Grant Competitions
- Monitor existing grants and grantee reports on their performance.

Regulations:

- The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA)

Other Federal Activities:

- National Charter School Resource Center

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

The Department conducted Congressional consultation as part of the development of its FY 2018-22 Strategic Plan and the FY 2018-19 Agency Priority Goals. Additionally, the work of CSP involves collaboration with Congress and key constituents to support the work of the programs and CSP grantees.