



Agency Priority Goal Action Plan

Education Freedom

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

APG Deputy Goal Leader(s): Ellen Safranek, Director of Charter School Programs, OESE

Overview

Impact Statement

Improve awareness of and access to high-quality K-12 education opportunities for students and families.

Achievement Statement

By September 30, 2021, the Department will increase both the number and percentage of total charter school students and total scholarship students nationwide.

- Charter school student enrollment will increase from 3.29 million to 3.51 million (6.90 percent of all students in public schools).
- The number of scholarship students, including participants in state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts programs will increase from 482,000 to 579,250 (1.10 percent of the total school age population).
- The number of parents who receive support and engagement through technical assistance and other resources will increase by 5 percent per year.

Overview

Challenge

- Reliance upon 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.
- The Department is committed to an aggressive and meaningful set of strategic approaches but will need the cooperation of states and local authorities.

Overview

Opportunity

- Increasing the number of new charter schools nationally and the number of students enrolled in charter schools will provide opportunities for educational choices that can better prepare students for the 21st century.
- Increasing public and private school choices that empower parents, local communities and students and help students to achieve their educational goals and career ambitions will include being more transparent and informative about school choice opportunities and resources.
- The Administration's proposed Education Freedom Scholarships would empower states to expand families' access to education opportunities. These can include private schools, but states are not required to include any specific education setting. The proposal respects that each student is unique and deserves a personalized education experience. Scholarships can help students access a variety of opportunities, including career and technical education, apprenticeships, dual enrollment, special education services, advanced or elective courses not available in their assigned school buildings, transportation to out-of-zone education providers, among others.

Leadership & Implementation Team

Christopher Rinkus, Goal Leader

Ellen Safranek, Deputy Goal Leader

Goal Structure & Strategies

This is a two-year Agency Priority Goal (APG) covering FY 2020 and FY 2021. To achieve this APG, the Department will:

- Conduct Charter Schools Program (CSP) grant competitions to award new grants to entities, such as state entities (SE) and charter management organizations (CMOs) and support national dissemination activities.
- 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.
- Through its National Charter Schools Resource Center (NSCRC), conduct outreach to current and prospective high-quality charter operators, state education agencies, charter authorizers, and the general public to increase awareness of, and to implement effective practices in, the charter school sector.
- Through CSP's National Dissemination program, disseminate information nationally about effective charter school programs to current and prospective charter schools, and facilitate partnerships between effective and emerging charter schools, develop curricular or other materials based on successful practices within existing charter schools, and conduct evaluations that document successful practices of existing charter schools.

Goal Structure & Strategies

- The School Choice and Improvement Program (SCIP) will monitor and provide technical assistance to Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) Program Grantees and review grantee performance reports for information on parent participation in SFEC activities and enhanced parent capacity to work with schools and service providers to meet the academic and developmental needs of their children.
- Work closely with the NSCRC and coordinate with SFEC program grantees to engage parents on school choice, among other topics.
- Continue to provide technical assistance to Congress to support greater choice and options in education and secure support for Education Freedom Scholarships, which could incentivize private donations of up to \$5 billion for student scholarships and encourage state-based programs to also fund increased education school choice options and better support families.

Summary of Progress – FY2020 Q1-Q2

- The Department conducted outreach to states, schools, and other educational organizations to promote Education Freedom Scholarships. Senior officials made approximately 113 visits to states in which Education Freedom Scholarships, state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts programs were mentioned.
- On February 13, the Department issued a Notice Inviting Applications for the District of Columbia Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP). The purpose of the OSP is to provide low-income parents residing in the District of Columbia with expanded opportunities for enrolling their children in private schools in DC. These scholarships may be used to pay the tuition, fees and transportation expenses (if any) to enable students to attend the participating District private elementary or secondary school of their choice. The estimated award amount is \$17 million per year for up to five years.

Summary of Progress – FY2020 Q1-Q2

- The Department continues to emphasize the importance of providing timely information to parents and other stakeholders about overall school and State performance. In Q1, the Department reviewed 53 state websites to better understand state-level implementation of the important report card requirements under ESSA, examining whether the report cards included the new elements required under the ESEA as amended by ESSA. Of the 40 states that published their report cards by January 15, approximately 30 states (75 percent) reported achievement data for the new subgroups: students in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, and military-connected children; approximately 25 states (63 percent) reported graduation rate data for students in foster care and students experiencing homeless and identified comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools; and approximately 20 states (50 percent) reported per pupil expenditures for the 2018-2019 school year.

Summary of Progress – FY2020 Q1-Q2

- CSP continues to provide stakeholders with valuable tools and resources to realize their respective goals. In Q2, NCSRC hosted a school improvement workshop for CSP grantees focusing on the Four Domains for Significant and Sustainable Charter School Improvement which builds on the Four Domains Framework for Rapid School Improvement, which has been used in more than 25 states. This new framework is customized for the charter school sector and supports school improvement efforts across four domains: leadership, talent, instruction, and culture.
- NCSRC also released “Charter School Facilities: Emerging Trends” a report that described three key trends that will likely impact the charter school facilities landscape for the next 5-10 years. The trends are (1) geographic and population changes, such as shifts in student enrollment and population migration, will create potential changes in urban and rural charter school markets; (2) more mature facilities finance market and investments will likely benefit charter schools; and (3) changing academic strategies, community partnerships, and 21st century career preparation, will create the need for more innovative facilities models. The report also underscored that acquisition and financing of adequate school facilities continues to be a major barrier for school operators and continued growth.

Summary of Progress – FY2020 Q1-Q2

- The Department continues to support the growth and sustainability of local educational agencies (LEAs) to support magnet schools. On March 10, the Department issued a Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) for MSAP which will fund important activities designed to improve students' academic achievement, including acquiring books, materials, technology, and equipment to support a rigorous, theme-based academic program; conducting planning and promotional activities; providing professional development opportunities for teachers to implement the academic program; paying the salaries of effective teachers and other instructional personnel; and supporting student transportation costs. This NIA also includes a competitive preference priority for MSAP projects in Qualified Opportunity Zone, which promote economic development and job creation in distressed communities through preferential tax treatment for investors.

Key Milestones

Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Comments
Establish timelines for preparation of charter school resources and an outreach plan with CSP contractor.	FY 2020 Q1	Completed		CSP Director	CSP worked with its contractor to develop a publication and outreach plan for the remainder of the fiscal year.
Establish a plan to disseminate information about effective charter school programs to current and prospective charter schools, facilitate partnerships between effective and emerging charter schools, and develop materials based on successful practices within charter schools.	FY 2020 Q2	Completed		CSP Director	<p>CSP continues to work with its contractor to develop resources that can support grantees in improving the quality and performance of their programs. The CSP contractor published a multimedia school case study on the “Preparation for Replication: Case Study of AECl” which considers the key decisions and processes that contributed to New York City’s Charter High School for Architecture, Engineering, and Construction Industries successful replication and contains videos and tools to guide other charter school stakeholders through a decision-making process.</p> <p>CSP provided direct technical assistance to grantees to improve the quality and effectiveness of their respective programs. On February 24-26, CSP convened all grantees in DC for their annual project director’s conference. CSP also hosted two (2) listening sessions to gather feedback to further update and streamline upcoming nonregulatory guidance and two (2) webinars for State grantees to share their practices related to authorizing and engaging charter schools.</p>

Key Milestones

Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Comments
Identify or develop resources for parents on education topics, including choice.	FY2020 Q2	In Progress		Goal Leader	As of March 30, the Department's National Comprehensive Center and Regional Comprehensive Centers compiled 142 resources to support educators, school leaders, and families as they rapidly transition from traditional classroom learning settings to learning from home through online resources. These resources and tools are provided at no cost and provide access to everything from fully developed lessons aligned to state and national standards, software for creating mathematical structures and music, to online databases of state and territory policies and practices related to digital instructional materials in K12 education.
Publish Notices Inviting Applications (NIA) for new grants.	FY 2020 Q3	In Progress		CSP Director	On January 27, the Department issued a Notice Inviting Applications for the Charter Schools Program's Grants to State Entities (SE). Due to COVID-19, CSP extended the deadline for this competition to May 15, 2020.

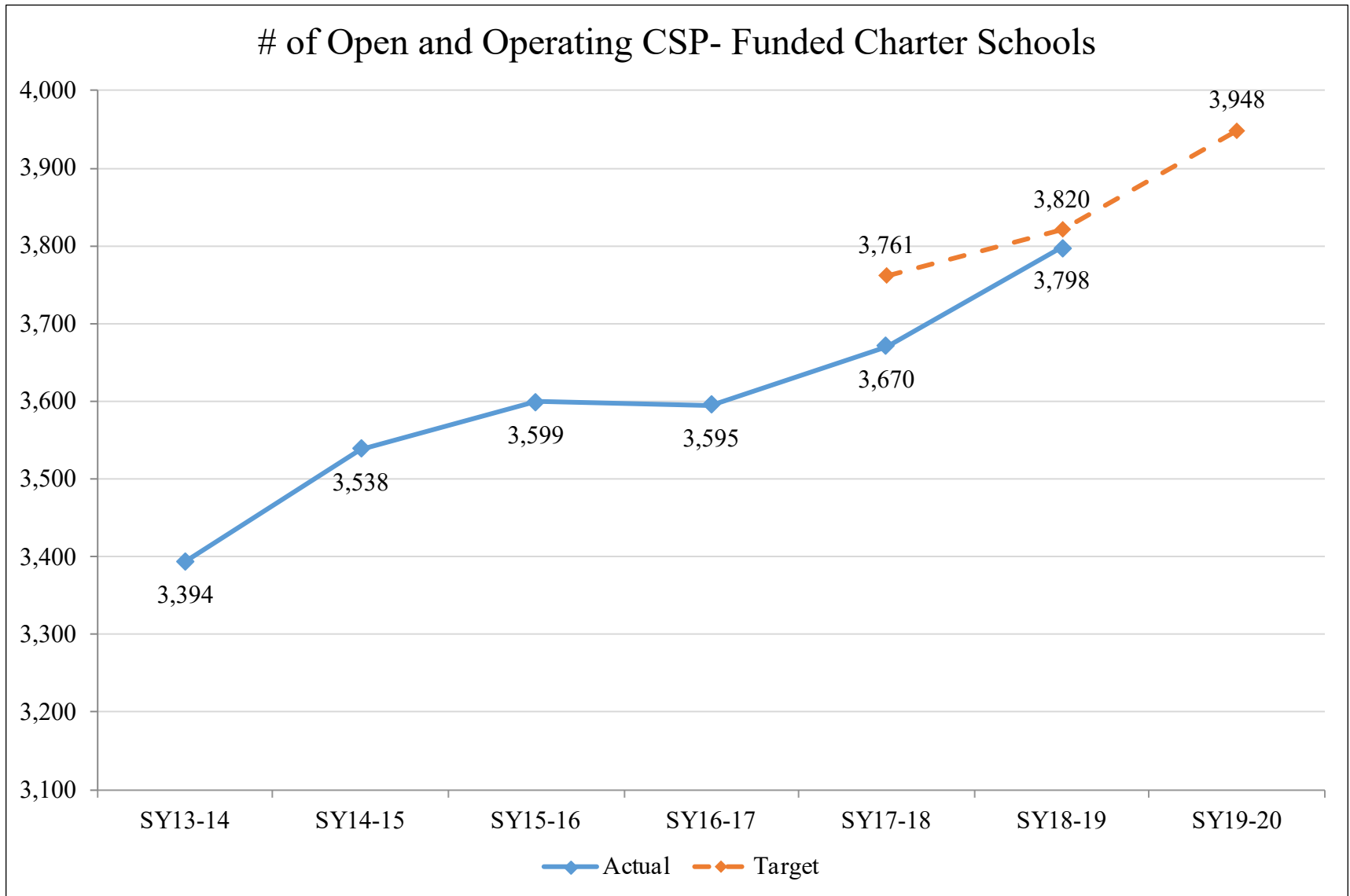
Key Milestones

Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Comments
Release charter school resources.	FY 2020 Q3	In Progress		Goal Leader	CSP continues to provide stakeholders with valuable tools and resources to realize their respective goals. The CSP contractor published “The SMART Objectives Toolkit” to support prospective and current Charter Schools Program (CSP) grantees in developing successful initiatives. The toolkit combines planning principles with CSP grant requirements and provides examples of CSP-funded project objectives and performance measures that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timebound (SMART).
Monitor and provide technical assistance to SFEC grantees on supporting systemic family engagement in states and enhancing the capacity of parents to work with schools and service providers effectively in meeting the academic and developmental needs of their children.	FY 2020 Q4	In Progress		Goal Leader	Due to COVID-19, the SFEC program moved its in-person annual directors' meeting previously scheduled for March 12-13 to an all-virtual meeting. Topics covered included the use of evidence and local evaluations, developing and strengthening partnerships, financial management, reporting requirements, and how SFEC grantees could support families affected by school closures.

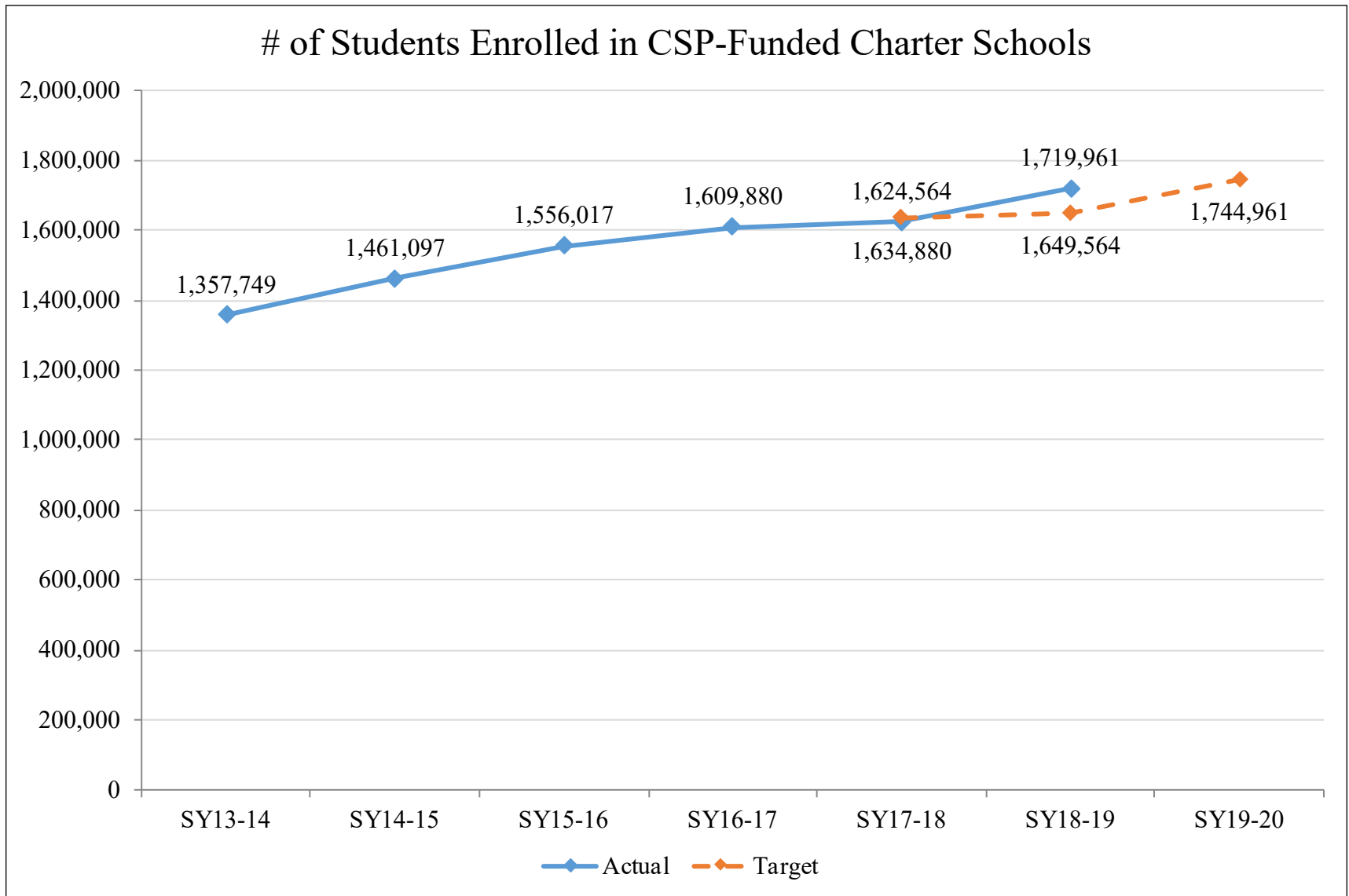
Key Milestones

Milestone	Deadline	Status	Change from previous quarter	Owner	Comments
Award new grants.	FY 2020 Q4	In Progress		CSP Director	On March 30, the Department awarded \$65 million in funding to 13 different Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), or organizations that operate a network of public charter schools, located across 8 states. These CMOs propose to replicate or expand over 100 high-quality public charter schools over the next several years.
Award continuation grants.	FY 2020 Q4	In Progress		CSP Director	Reported as activities occur.
Continue to release resources on education freedom scholarships.	FY2020	In Progress		Goal Leader	Reported as activities occur.
Provide outreach to states on education freedom scholarships, state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts programs.	FY 2020	In Progress		Goal Leader	As of March 30, Department officials made approximately 113 visits to States in which education freedom scholarships, state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts programs were mentioned.

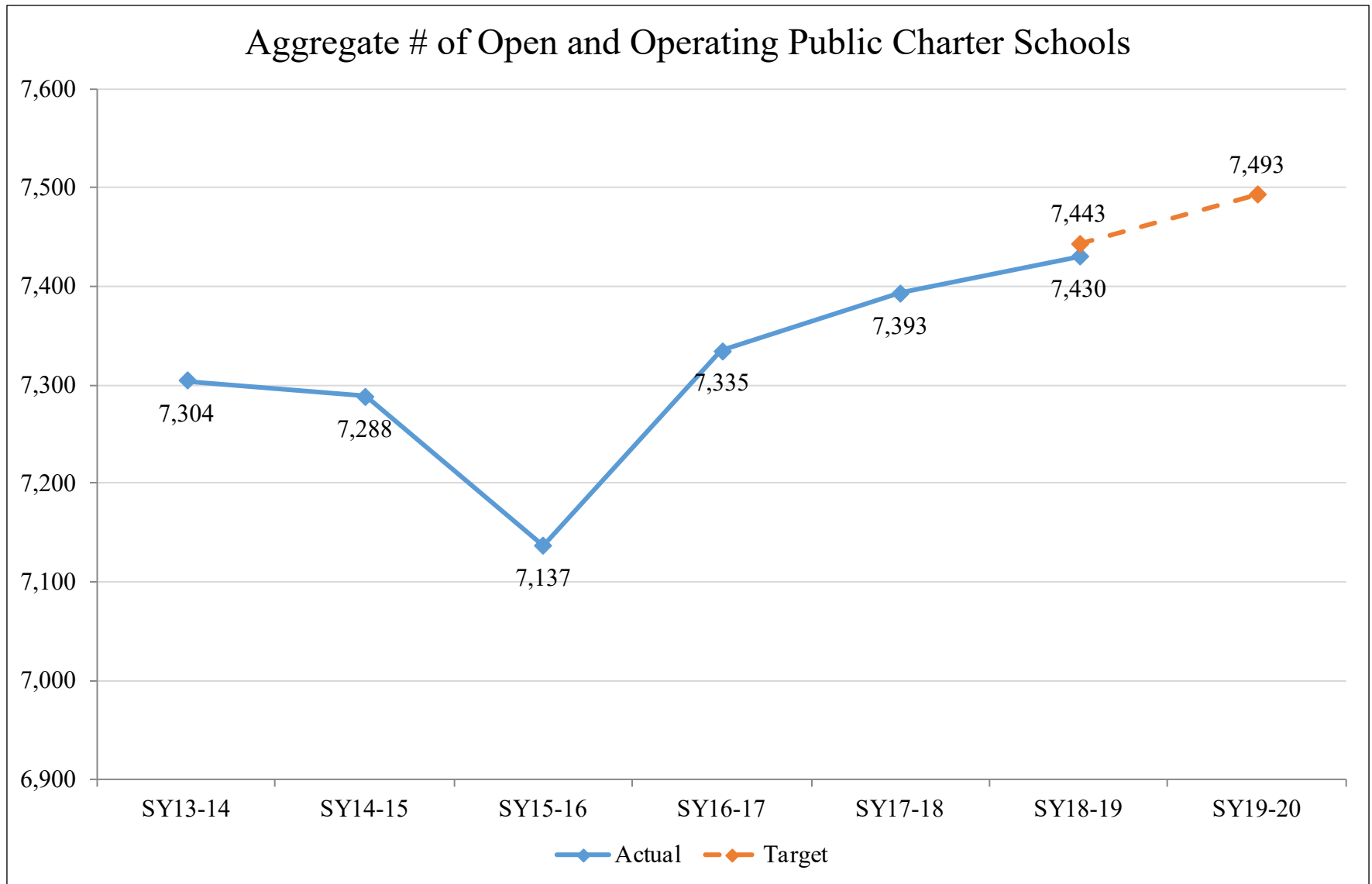
Key Indicators



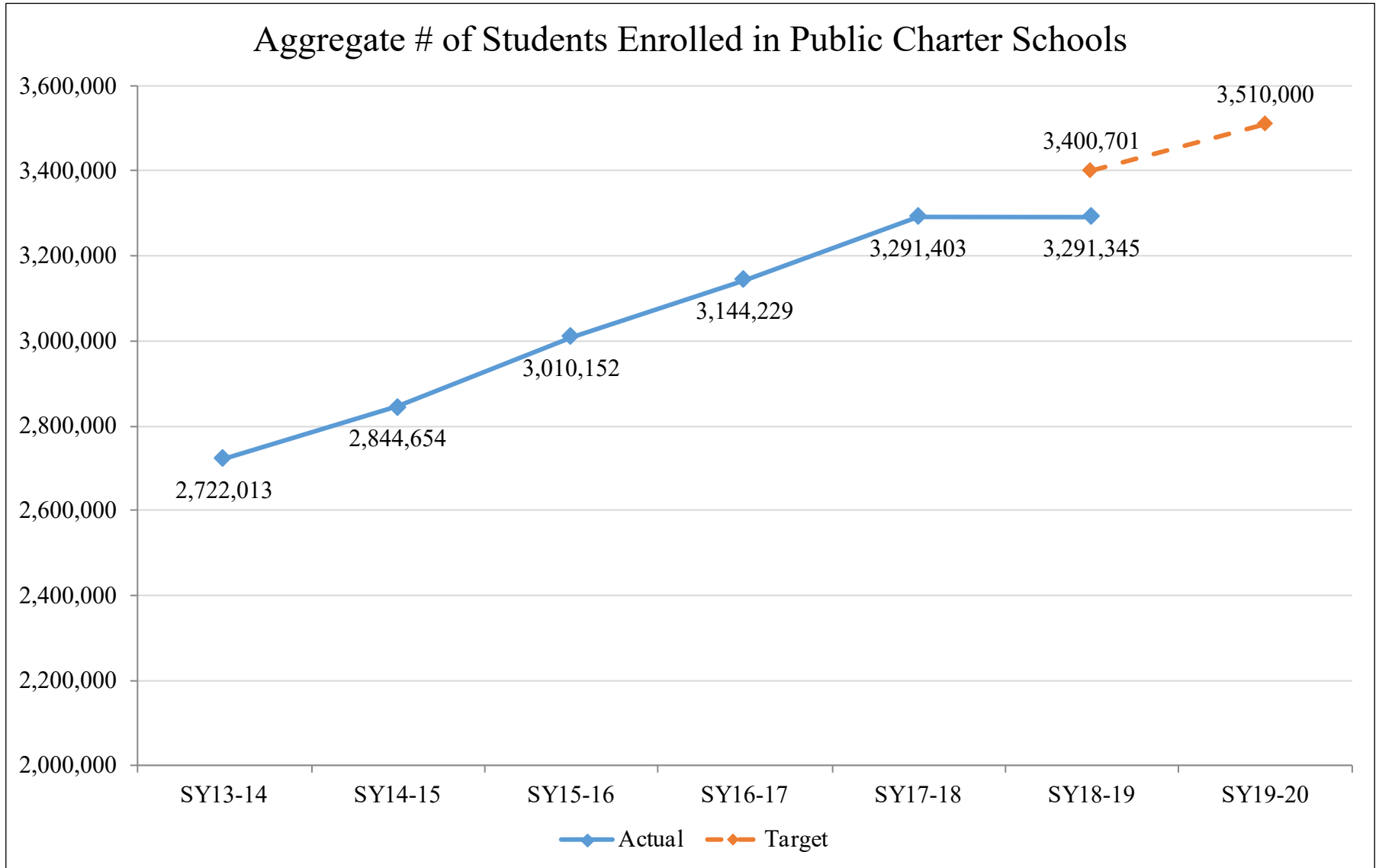
Key Indicators



Key Indicators

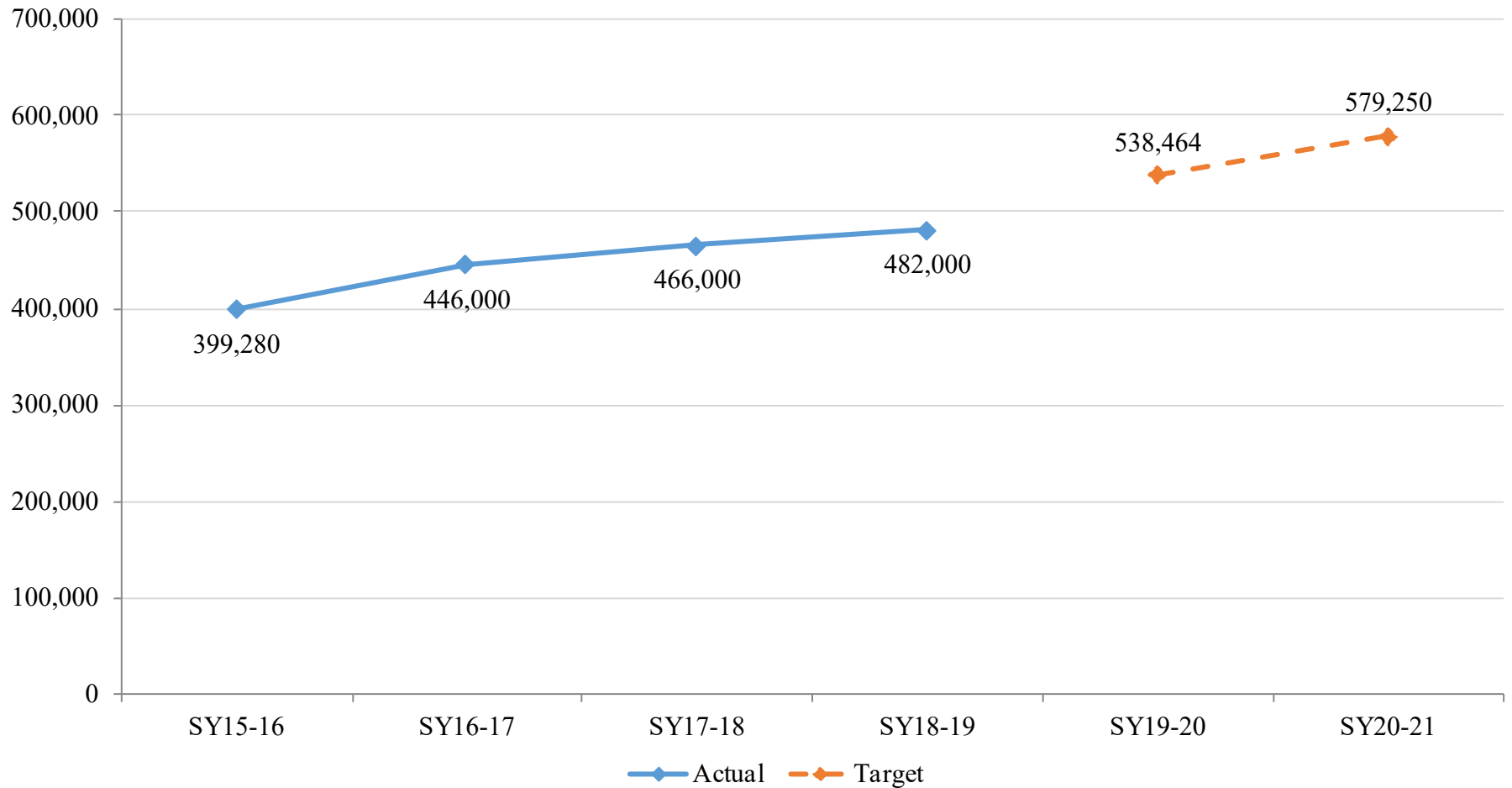


Key Indicators



Key Indicators

Aggregate # of scholarships provided through means such as state-based vouchers, tax credit scholarships and education savings account programs



Data Accuracy and Reliability

- Data for key indicators related to charter schools have been updated with SY18-19 (FY20) data.
- 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 Schools Program (CSP) grant annual performance reports (where schools are identified in the grant applications).
- The data for the number of scholarship students, including participants in state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships and education savings accounts, derive from EdChoice, The ABCs of School Choice. The targets for fiscal year (FY) 2020 and FY 2021 are imputed by the Department based on EdChoice reported data for the last three years.
- The data for the number of parents who receive support and engagement on school choice options through technical assistance and other resources derive from internal Department outreach data and performance reports from Department-funded technical assistance centers.

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
- CSP grantees
- State educational agencies and state authorizers
- Charter Management Organizations
- SFEC Program Grantees

Program Activities:

- Grant competitions
- Monitor existing grants and grantee reports on their performance
- Utilize the newly organized evidence-based policies division of the Department's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education to identify and proliferate best practice examples for the field.

Regulations:

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

Other Federal Activities:

- National Charter School Resource Center

Additional Information

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

- The Department conducted congressional consultation as part of the development of its U.S. Department of Education's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018-22, the FY 2018-19 APGs, and the FY 2020-21 APGS.
- Additionally, the work of CSP involves collaboration with Congress and key constituents to support the work of the programs and CSP grantees.