



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)

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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

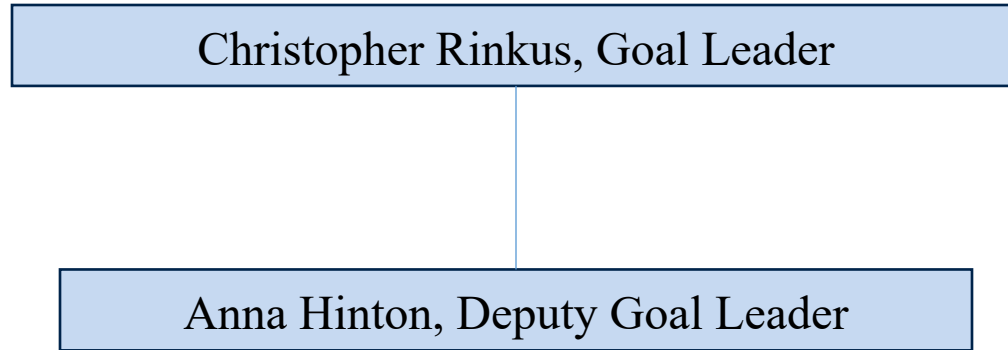
- Reliance upon charter school authorizers to provide more monitoring and technical assistance to both existing and new charter schools.
- Charter school expansion may be limited by state and local laws and policies.
- A misunderstanding of the public nature of charter schools may impact the opening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



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 – FY 2020 Q4

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Charter School Resource Center (NCSRC) Quarter 4 meetings, events, and learning opportunities continued to occur in remote environments.
 - The following Quarter 4 virtual learning opportunities were held to support Charter Schools Program (CSP) grantees with effective CSP grant implementation. In addition to covering topics of interest to grantees: [Leading in the Unknown: A Self-Guided Learning Experience Focused on Leadership](#), [How are State Entities Improving Authorizing? An NCSRC Policy Framework and Technical Assistance in Charter Schools Program States](#), [From Pandemic to Equity for All: How Grantees are Responding to Emerging Challenges in Charter School Financing](#), and Grantee Showcases of AppleTree Institute and Hiawatha Academies.
 - Additionally, the following Quarter 4 virtual learning opportunities covered topics of interest to the charter school sector: [The Death Spiral: Identifying Indicators of Distress in Charter Schools \(A Conversation with Authorizers\)](#), [Risk in Charter School Lending: Indicators of Distress and the Charter School Growth Fund's Approach to Risk Management and Indicators of Distress \(And What They Mean in the Charter Sector\)](#).
- On September 29, 2020, CSP awarded seven new grants totaling approximately \$4 million to charter school developers for the opening of new charter schools and the replication and expansion of high-quality charter schools. Funds will support developers in planning, program design, and initial implementation of charter schools.

Summary of Progress – FY 2020 Q4

- On September 30, 2020, the Charter Schools Program awarded eight new grants totaling approximately \$82 million to State entities in New Jersey, California, the District of Columbia, Florida, South Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Texas. Funds will support State entities in preparing for the operation of new charter schools and replicating and expanding high-quality charter schools.
- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) published a recent study entitled [*“Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2019”*](#) and provided new data and analyses from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey.
- The National Center for Research on Education Access and Choice published a study on [“How America’s Schools Responded to the COVID Crisis.”](#)
- The Regional Educational Laboratories produced evidence-based resources to support educators and families teaching students learning at home, including [Teaching Math to Young Children for Families and Caregivers](#), [Supporting Mathematical Problem Solving at Home](#) and [Supporting Your Child’s Reading at Home](#).
- The Office of Elementary of Secondary Education created a new resource collection to highlight resources for [Learning at Home](#) for parents and families, teachers, school administrators, and state and local administrators.

Key Milestones

Key Milestone	Deadline	Milestone Status	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

Key Milestone	Deadline	Milestone Status	Owner	Comments
Identify or develop resources for parents on education topics, including choice.	FY2020 Q2	Completed	Goal Leader	<p>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.</p> <p>In Quarter 3, the CCNetwork expanded the collection to include nine curated topical resource collections featuring resources for families, educators, school leaders, districts, and state educational agencies to facilitate online and distance learning, as well as resources to ensure equity for all students, for social emotional and behavioral support, and highlighting trauma-informed practices for remote learning.</p>
Publish Notices Inviting Applications (NIA) for new grants.	FY 2020 Q3	Completed	CSP Director	<p>On April 30, the Department announced \$180 million in available funding for the Education Stabilization Fund – Rethink K12 Education Models Grants (ESF-REM) program. The purpose of this program is to provide support to State Educational Agencies (SEAs) in States with the highest coronavirus burden to address the specific educational needs of students, their parents, and teachers in public and non-public elementary and secondary schools.</p> <p>On May 22, the Department issued a Notice Inviting Applications for two programs (1) Grants to Charter School Developers for the Opening of New Charter Schools and (2) Grants to Charter School Developers for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools (CFDA number 84.282E).</p>

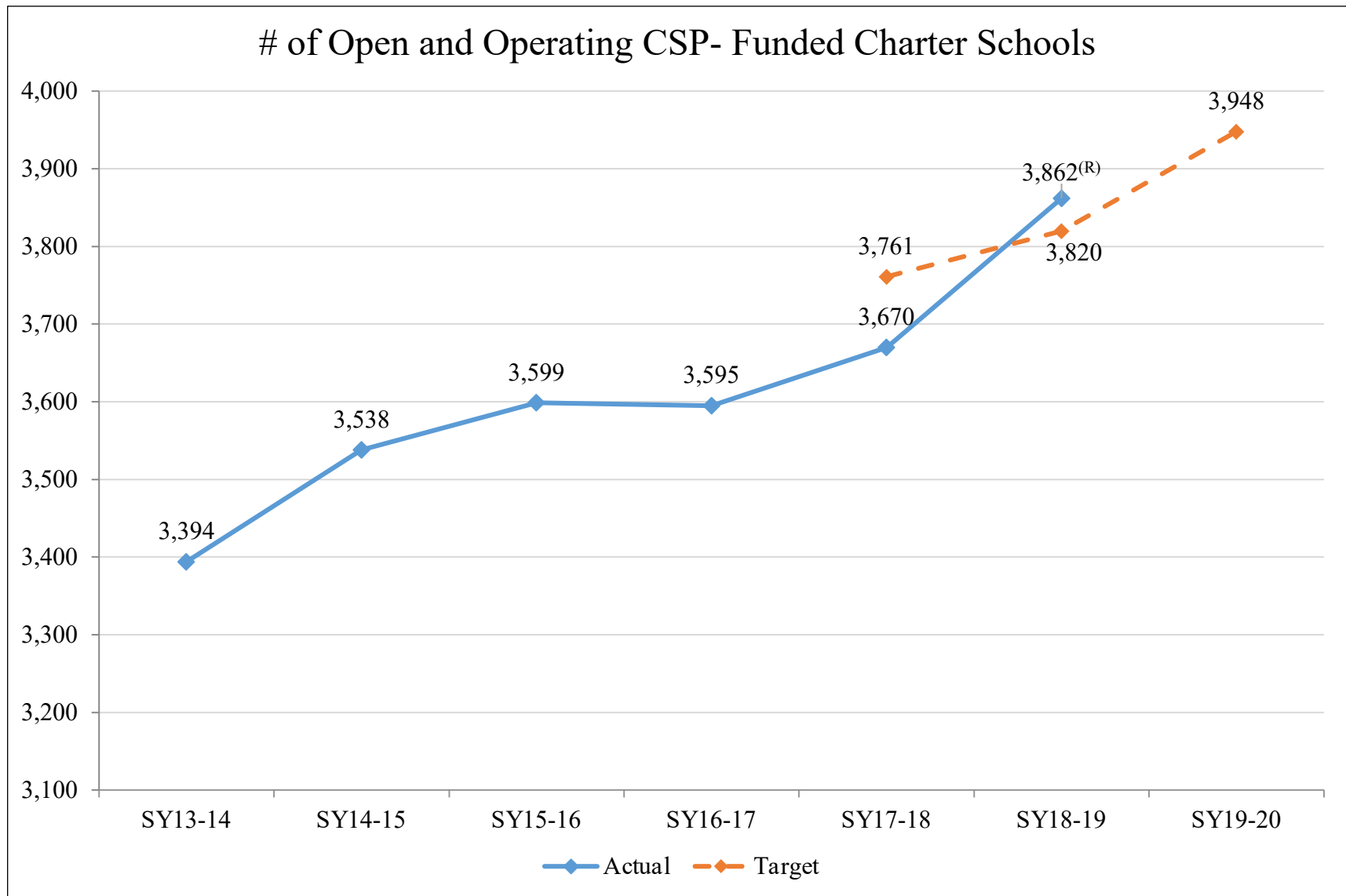
Key Milestones

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Release charter school resources.	FY 2020 Q3	Completed	Goal Leader	<p>In Q3, NCSRC continued to disseminate a national newsletter with resources relevant to charter schools, Charter Schools Resource Center: Newsletters. NCSRC also created a regularly updated webpage of resources targeted to CSP grantees for responding to and recovering from changes in the charter school sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, Charter Schools Resources Center: COVID-19.</p> <p>CSP also hosted two listening sessions for charter school and education sector leaders on the topic of Charter Schools in Native American Communities. A report on listening session outcomes, including recommendations on how to support the development of charter schools that serve Native American and Indigenous students will be released in Q4.</p>
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	<p>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, which will now be held on November 16-18, 2020. 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.</p>

Key Milestones

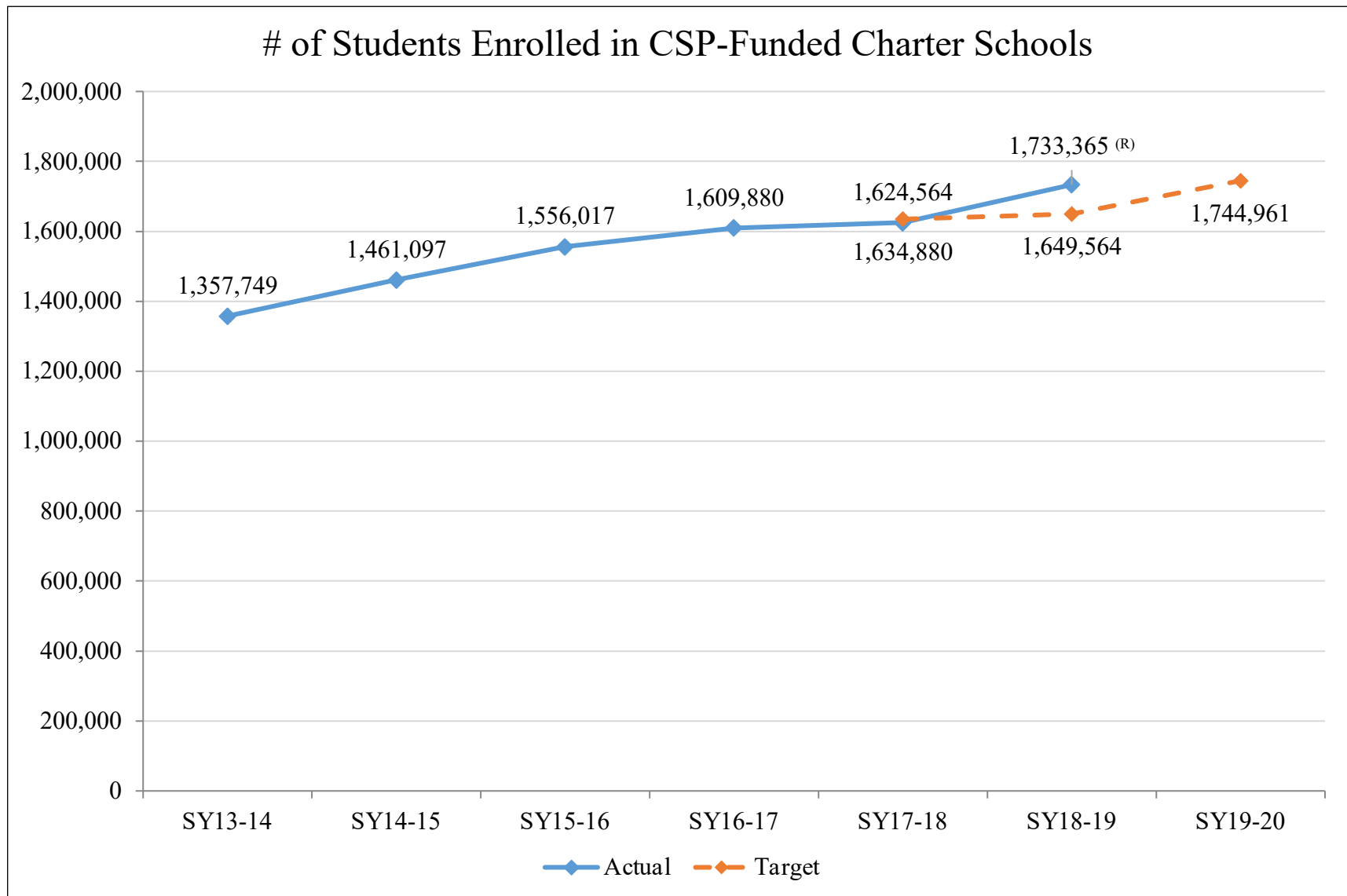
Key Milestone	Deadline	Milestone Status	Owner	Comments
Award new grants.	FY 2020 Q4	Completed	CSP Director	On September 29, the Department awarded seven grants for nearly \$4 million in funding to for Charter school developers to open new charter schools and to replicate and expand other high-quality charter schools. On September 30, the Department awarded another 8 grants for nearly \$82 million to support state entities in preparing for operations of high-quality charter schools.
Award continuation grants.	FY 2020 Q4	In-Progress	CSP Director	Charter Management Organization continuation grants for FY 2020 are scheduled for obligation in March 2021.
Continue to release resources on education freedom scholarships.	FY2020	Completed	Goal Leader	Two research publications, one by the National Center for Education Access and Choice and another by the National Center for Education Statistics were disseminated in July 2020, meeting the FY20 target.
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	<p>As of September 30, Department officials made approximately 113 physical visits and held another 29 virtual events with States in which education freedom scholarships, state-based vouchers, tax-credit scholarships, and education savings accounts programs were mentioned, for a total of 142 outreach events.</p> <p>Although COVID-19 agency travel restrictions precluded official travel to states, Department officials are exploring additional remote means to advance this work.</p>

Key Indicators



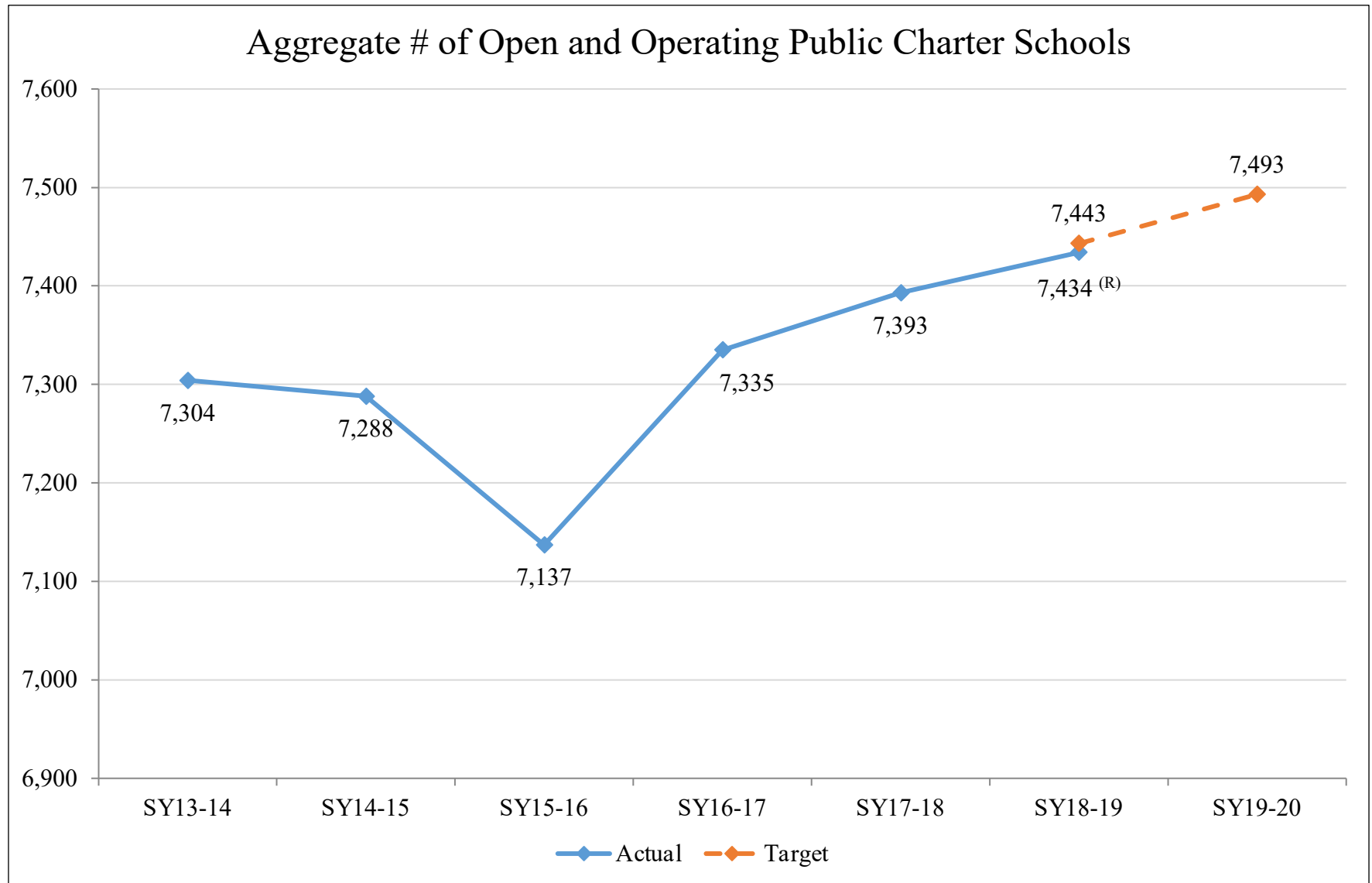
^(R) Revised data. New data was available in Quarter 4.

Key Indicators



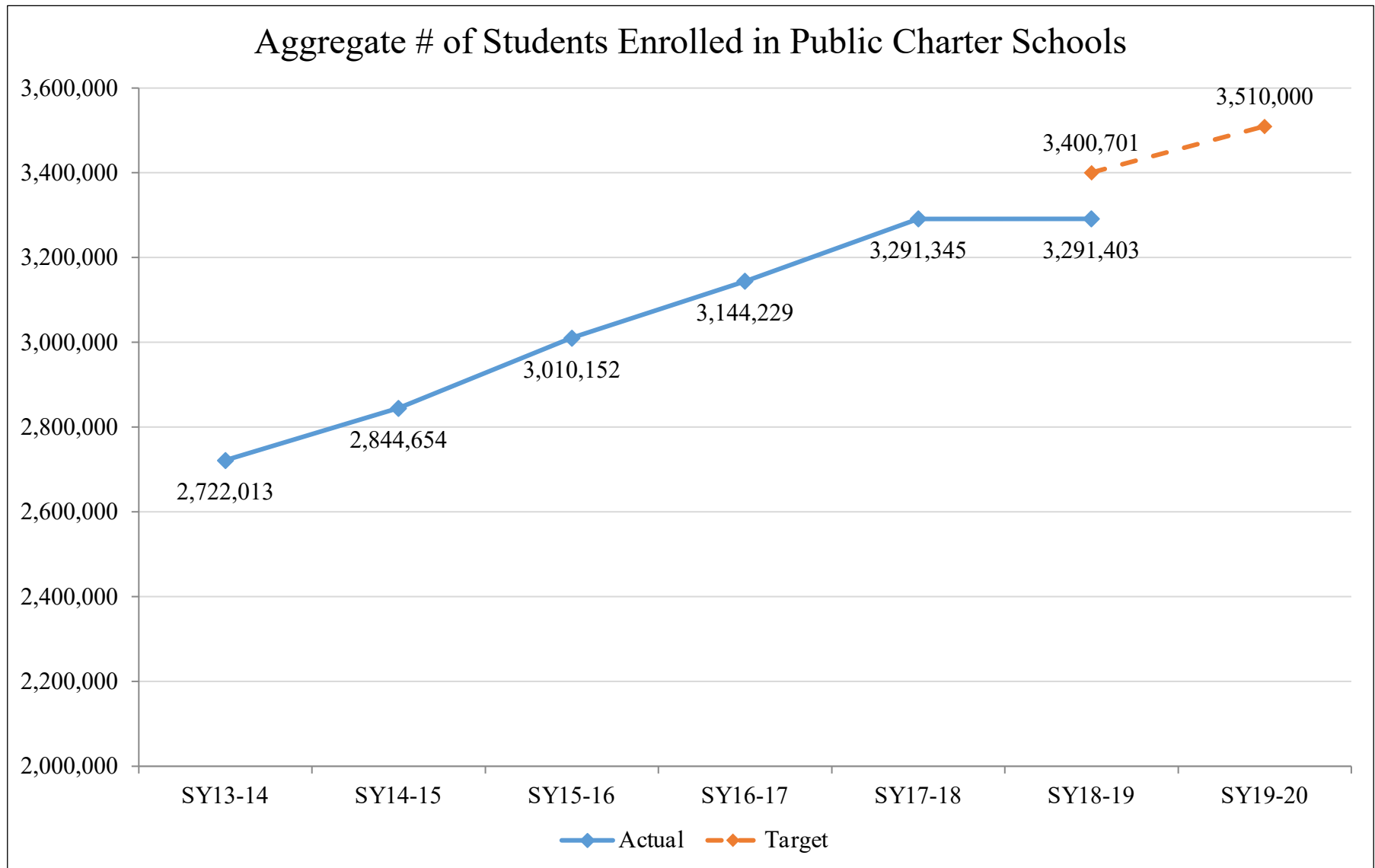
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Key Indicators



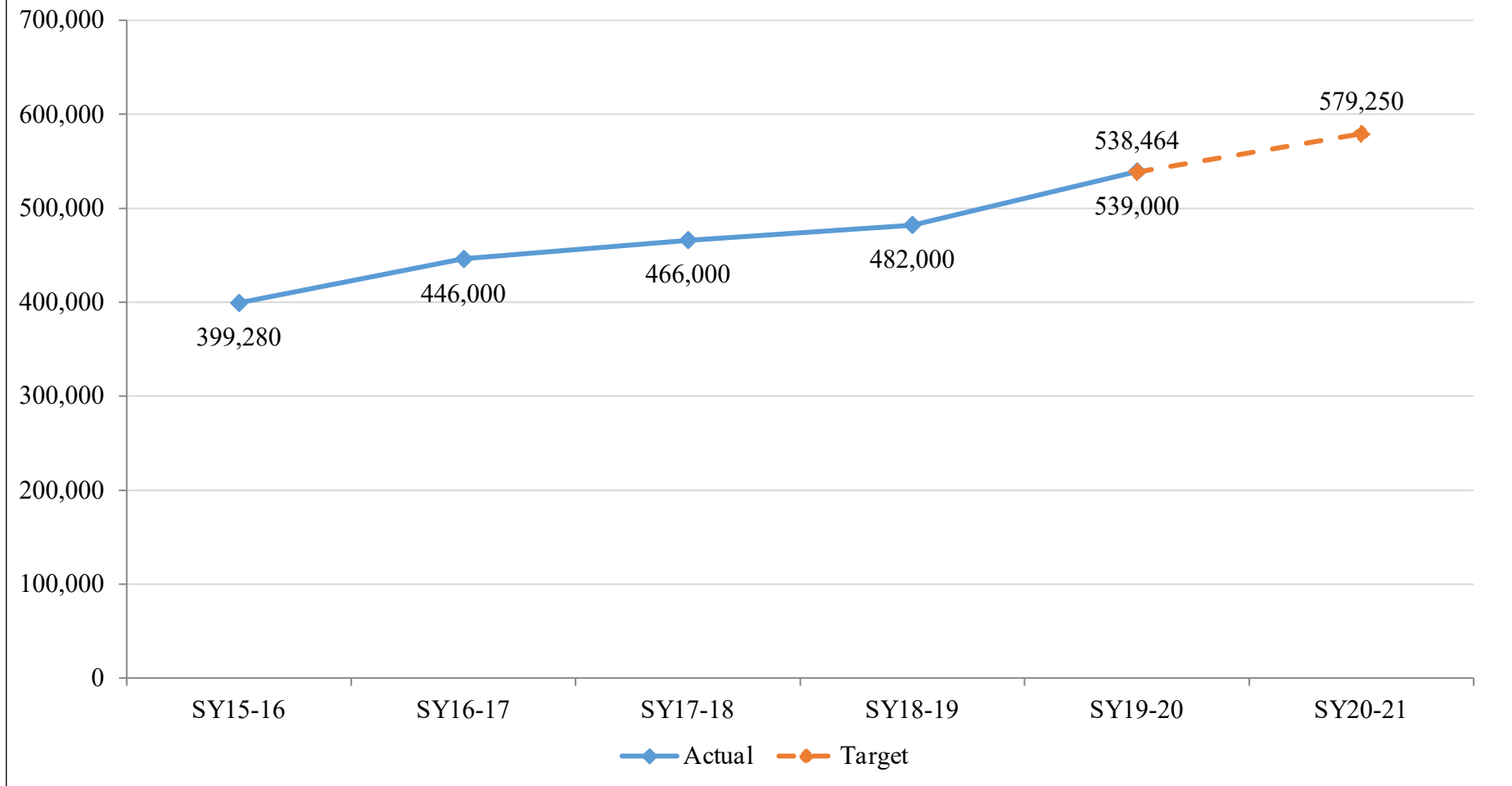
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Key Indicators



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.