

Student Outreach and Re-engagement Centers (SOAR)



April, 2015

In February of 2013, CPS launched three Student Support and Re-Engagement Centers (SOAR) focused on locating out of school, high school aged youth and assisting them with getting back into school. The SOAR Centers support students across the city and are integrated into community based organizations located in neighborhoods with high populations of dropouts including Garfield Park, Little Village, and Roseland.

The SOAR Centers perform six core functions including:

- **Outreach** to out of school youth and chronically truant youth. SOAR has dedicated Student Engagement Specialists who conduct outreach focused on locating students who have dropped out of school. The outreach is a combination of visits conducted by staff leveraging information from the CPS Student Information System and referrals from outside organizations.
- **Enrollment** assistance with getting back into the best fit school based on student assessments and academic history. A Re-Engagement Facilitator works with each student to develop a graduation plan and determine their educational goal. The Facilitator helps students select an enrollment option and facilitates the enrollment process.
- **Monitoring** support for students post-re-enrollment. The Student Engagement Specialists continue to work with the student until they reach stable enrollment of 45 consecutive days of enrollment. During this time, the Student Engagement Specialist monitor the student's attendance and academic performance and provides support to overcome barriers to success.
- **Workshops** to prepare students for re-entry. During the workshop students reflect on the factors contributing to past struggles in school, develop communication and coping skills to support educational success, build a network of fellow students also returning school, and complete projects focused on the dropout crisis. The students leave the workshop with a sense of accomplishment that fuels confidence in their ability to graduate from high school.
- **Credit Recovery** courses facilitated by a Certified Teacher. Credit Recovery courses are offered to students who are awaiting placement in school or who need only a few credits for graduation.
- **Social Emotional** supports through individual and group counseling services.

The SOAR Centers are staffed with CPS staff and resources to facilitate re-engagement, re-enrollment, and linkages to school services. Staffing at each center includes:

- 1 Re-engagement Facilitator to evaluate student's academic needs, develop a graduation plan, and facilitate re-enrollment if necessary.
- 4 Re-engagement Specialists to conduct outreach to recent dropouts and conduct follow-up with targeted students post visit to re-engagement center.
- 1 Credit Recovery Teacher at the Little Village and Roseland sites to provide on-line credit recovery to students who are awaiting placement, need only a few credits to graduate, or are not yet ready to return to school.

Depending upon the student's age and credits and information gathered from the student's previous school, the SOAR Center will make a re-enrollment recommendation. Students may be referred to an attendance boundary school or an Options School.

Since opening the SOAR Centers, CPS has supported over 4,000 students. During the 2013-2014 school year, 68% of the students remained enrolled in school.