



Welcome to Project **SOAR** (Secondary Options for Academic Recovery)

Established March, 2015

**Wayne Township Public Schools
Department of Student Support Services**

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Lead Teacher

Christina Corrente

SOAR Teacher

Crystal Olson

SOAR Counselor

Project SOAR: Secondary Options for Academic Recovery

Research indicates that the incidence of school anxiety, school refusal, and school avoidance has grown significantly over the past several years. A recent study by Swick and Jellinick states the prevalence of school avoidance at **5% of the total school population**.

- 88% of students with school avoidance and refusal present with at least one psychiatric diagnosis
- Affects boys and girls equally
- Peak incidence at ages 5-6 with recurrence between ages 10-11
- Pure truancy (a separate issue) require different management strategies
- Those students displaying both anxiety and truancy around school attendance are most likely to be suffering from a psychiatric illness.

Pediatric News, 50.9 (Sept. 2016): p.15

Project SOAR: Secondary Options for Academic Recovery

- Project SOAR is an alternative educational program option for both special education students with IEPs as well as general education students covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974.
- The intent of Project SOAR is to provide a flexible,blended learning alternative option for students who may present with any of the following: school anxiety, phobia, or avoidance; medical conditions prohibiting regular attendance; depression; students in treatment for chemical dependency; students requiring academic recovery of credit lost; or students who are involved in the juvenile justice system.

Project SOAR: Secondary Options for Academic Recovery

STAFFING:

- **Lead Teacher: Roberta Rydell-O'Connor-**
Certificated Teacher of Students with Disabilities; Wilson Reading Level 1
Certified
- **Christina Corrente:** Certificated Teacher of Students with Disabilities /
Secondary Mathematics: Certificated
- **Crystal Olson:** Certificated School Counselor

So why SOAR?

- Supports the district's commitment to a philosophy of inclusion;
- Provide alternative routes to meeting high school graduation requirements;
- Provides flexibility in scheduling for students with abbreviated days;
- Accommodates students who attend partial day therapeutic behavioral or rehabilitation programs;
- What chance do individuals with no high school diploma have to be gainfully employed in a position which can support them or their families?
- What is the cost in social support programs for high school dropouts? What percentage of incarcerated individuals dropped out of school?
- Why SHOULDN'T we provide alternatives to way students learn? All students CAN learn, but not all students learn in the same way.

Enrollment

- Project SOAR began in March, 2015 with two students.
- During the 2015-2016 school year, Project SOAR graduated 12 Wayne Hills or Wayne Valley seniors as well as 1 senior from Clifton High School (received on tuition basis).
- Summer SOAR, July-August 2016
- 17 students, both general education and students with disabilities enrolled for the 2016-2017 school year.
- Summer SOAR, July-August 2017

Enrollment

- For the 2016-2017 school year, Project SOAR is projected to graduate 15 Seniors from Wayne Hills High School and/or Wayne Valley High School.
- To date, SOAR has serviced a total of 53 students by providing blended education for the full spectrum of coursework required by New Jersey DOE for graduation as well as electives.

SOAR: Built-in Supports

- Transportation
- Mandatory school-based counseling by certificated Wayne School Counselor
- On-site special education teachers to ensure compliance with IEP or 504 required accommodations and/or modifications
- On-site special education teacher to provide live support in assignment completion or evaluation
- Staff utilize flexibility in developing appropriate pacing chart to meet student course requirements

Project SOAR: Who's appropriate?

- To qualify for Project SOAR, a student must be recommended by school personnel or by a parent. The referral form must be submitted by a School Counselor/CST member to the SOAR intake committee for consideration.
- Once a student is enrolled into Project SOAR, the SOAR staff will enroll the student in the appropriate online instruction through Educere. SOAR staff will monitor attendance, participation, and the provision of support services. Through the Educere online program, students work at their own pace and are provided with a pace chart of assignments to be completed for each course. Online teachers grade the assignments and provide feedback to the students. Grades, progress, and the time spent on each activity can be viewed by students, parents, and SOAR staff.

Breakdown of Student Enrollment 2015-2017

Special Education Students: 29

General Education Students: 16

ESL Students: 4

504 Students: 4

Course Work

- For the 2016-2017 school year, we have offered total 46 courses, both complete and partial, based upon student need.
- To date, 25 of those courses have been completed with passing grades.
- Of the 21 remaining courses, students have until June 15th to complete them. Unfortunately, 1 course will not be able to be completed due to the student signing out of school.
- Our current passing rate is 97.8%. Last year's passing rate, including summer school, was 80.7%.

Pre- and Post-Counseling Outcome Assessment

The **SOAR Intake Form** asked students to rate their educational environment PRIOR to beginning SOAR.

The **SOAR Rating Scale** assessed the same items following student participation in SOAR.

Questions focused on:

- Comfort with educational environment
- Ability to navigate educational environment
- Management and self-regulation
- Individual goals
- Resources

Pre- and Post-Counseling Outcome Assessment

SOAR Intake Form

Students were asked to rate themselves as to their emotions and ability to handle their current situation on a 0 - 6 scale (0 low, 6 high).

Mean score=3.43 / 6.0

SOAR Rating Scale

After completing the SOAR program, each student was readministered the SOAR Rating Scale.

Mean score= 5.09 / 6.0

Students showed a 27.55% improvement in post-counseling outcomes after participating in SOAR.

Pre- and Post-Counseling Outcome Assessment

It is **CRITICAL** to note that these same students were on course to drop out of school due to chronic failure subsequent to their disabilities.

Student Success

“I have been a student at Project SOAR since November of 2016. My situation is a little different than most of the students at SOAR because I was not coming to take an online class but rather to catch up on a pile of work that seemed to quickly bury me. When I first found out about Project SOAR, I absolutely did not want to attend this program because all I did was imagine an environment that would be just like the harsh and cold school setting that I was not ready to go back to. As I walked into SOAR for the first time, these teachers I had never met before greeted me with warmth and kindness and I finally realized that this might not be so bad after all. As we approach the end of the school year, it is because of SOAR that I am no longer stuck in my head of [sic] stress and anxiety about school work that was due months ago. This relaxed yet productive environment made it much easier to complete the work I was supposed to; knowing that there would always be a teacher on hand who can teach me in a way I understand. I am one example of the positive impact Project SOAR has made for plenty of high school students in Wayne.”

-Brianna, grade 9, WHHS

Student Success

Mary Jane, parent of a 9th grade SOAR student

Cost Effectiveness of SOAR (per pupil cost):

<u>SOAR</u>	<u>Home Instruction</u>	<u>Average Out of District Tuition (only)</u>
\$3,192 per year	\$18,400 per year	\$55,000 per year
\$79.80 per week	\$460 per week	\$1,375 per week

Per student annually:

***SOAR saves \$15,208 when compared to Home Instruction.**

***SOAR saves \$51,808 when compared to an Out of District Placement.**

What's Next for Project SOAR?

Summer 2017:

Currently, 8 students are projected to attend Summer SOAR.

2017-2018 School Year:

We look forward to assisting a new group of students with the goal of helping them succeed in their individualized programs.

Student Success



Christopher, grade 12, WHHS



- **Project SOAR is literally the lifeline that many of our students need to be successful and earn a high school diploma.**
- **If we CAN think flexibly to create alternative programs for relatively low cost, and this flexibility guarantees our students a true chance in competing in today's economy, don't we have an obligation to give them every chance to succeed? Thank you, to the Wayne Township Board of Education and administration for your enthusiasm for providing ALL of our students what they need to be successful, contributing citizens in a democratic American society.**