



# Cradle Beach School-Based Program: Impact on Academic Achievement Executive Summary

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## Executive Summary

Project SOAR is a school based program operated by Cradle Beach, a Western New York organization with a rich history of providing services to disabled and disadvantaged children since 1888. The program provides intensive in-class tutoring, field trips, overnight monthly retreats and a residential summer enrichment camping experience. This report examines data collected from students who participated in Project SOAR during 2011-12, the second year of school-based program operations.

## Results

During the 2011-12 school year, project SOAR students demonstrated consistently robust academic performance. In each quarter of the year, the average overall GPA of the group exceeded 84.5%.

This level of achievement was consistent across all of the academic subjects analyzed in the study. Average grades of SOAR students met or exceed 84% in English Language Arts, 83% in Math, 84% in Science and 84% Social Studies in each quarter of the year.

The strength these students' academic skills was ultimately validated by their performance on the NYS academic tests in ELA and Math. Fifty percent of the SOAR students met or exceeded standards on the ELA test, compared to only 35.6% for the control group. Additionally, 34.8% of Project SOAR students met or exceed performance standards on the NYS Math test, while only 20% of control group students achieved this standard.

Expert assessment by teachers validated meaningful improvements on important skill factors related to success in school and later on in life. Almost all students who performed below acceptable levels at the beginning of the year demonstrated moderate to significant levels of improvement by the end of the year.

Measures of attitude (feelings of favorableness or unfavorableness) toward a performing behaviors associated with a variety of academic areas were assessed to determine the number of students whose success is potentially inhibited by negative attitudes. While attitudes toward specific types of academic activities varied, only a small number of Project SOAR students (4.2%) demonstrated negative overall attitudes toward engaging in academic behaviors.

Project SOAR students demonstrated almost equal levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for classroom as well as homework performance. This appears to be appropriate given the age

of the students as they transition from a developmental stage where the motivation for most things in life is defined by extrinsic factors. The observation that intrinsic factors play almost an equal role in their desire to perform well in the classroom and on homework is a positive sign.

Across multiple measures – academic grades, statewide academic tests, school attendance, as well as measures of academic attitudes, motivation and conflict resolution, a positive picture of student achievement and development has emerged with respect to students who participated in the Project SOAR program. As a group, the students appear to be doing well in school despite the many challenges commonly associated with being educated in the Buffalo School District.

Overall, Project SOAR provided a meaningful and enriching program for a group of students who otherwise would not have had exposure to a wide range of academic supports and culturally enriching experiences. The outcomes based data described in this report suggest that students have developed skills that should have a positive impact on their chances for success in future academic endeavors.