



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## New Funding Secured to Expand Proven-Effective Program that Boosts Student Achievement

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY August 22, 2014

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*Higgins, Kennedy, Ryan Deliver \$400,000 to Expand Cradle Beach's Project SOAR, which is Improving Student Performance within Buffalo Public Schools.*

*New Funding will Allow Project SOAR to Serve Up to 380 Buffalo Students.*

*Funding will Protect Project SOAR at Lovejoy Discovery School, Southside Elementary School and Lorraine Academy; Support Expansion into International Preparatory School.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Congressman Brian Higgins, Senator Tim Kennedy and Assemblyman Sean Ryan announced new funding they've secured to expand Cradle Beach's Project SOAR, a proven-effective program that is supporting the growth of Buffalo students and improving their achievement. The Buffalo lawmakers today delivered \$400,000 in AmeriCorps funding – awarded to New York State through the Corporation for National and Community Service – that will allow Cradle Beach to launch Project SOAR at the International Preparatory School, while protecting its programs at Lovejoy Discovery School, Southside Elementary School and Lorraine Academy.

This \$400,000 will cover program costs and allow 40 AmeriCorps members to support the learning of the hundreds of Buffalo Public Schools students that will be served after the expansion of Project SOAR. Project SOAR provides intensive in-class tutoring, field trips, overnight monthly retreats, mentoring, a residential summer enrichment camping experience, and six weeks of summer educational programming. The program provides an equivalent of 114 days of extended learning.

“With the challenges facing our schools, our community is constantly looking for innovative and effective programs to help students achieve their fullest potentials and reach their greatest heights. That's exactly what we have in Cradle Beach's Project SOAR,” said **Senator Tim Kennedy**. “With this \$400,000 in new funding, Project SOAR will be able to protect and preserve its existing programs and expand their reach even further, supporting the achievement of even more Buffalo students. Project SOAR presents Buffalo students with pathways toward success, opens up new opportunities, raises achievement and helps instills responsibility. Their programs work, and will help prepare Buffalo students for graduation and for college or careers.”

“This is a great project between Cradle Beach and Buffalo Schools that helps to support better outcomes for students,” said **Congressman Brian Higgins**. “The federal funding

authorized with the help of great advocacy by our state and federal delegation will allow for expansion of the program to serve even more of our youth.”

**Assemblyman Sean Ryan** said, “This funding will provide the critical resources Cradle Beach needs to expand the highly successful Project SOAR program. It should be noted that the future of this program and the opportunities it provides our students was in jeopardy. Thanks to this exciting announcement, we know that Project SOAR is moving forward to help the children of this community. I thank all our federal and state partners who are providing this investment that will benefit Cradle Beach and Project SOAR.”

**Cradle Beach CEO Timothy Boling** said, “Cradle Beach is thrilled to have this opportunity to expand Project SOAR within Buffalo Public Schools. It is effectively improving achievement and attendance for over 220 students, and with this new funding, we’ll be able to nearly double our impact in Buffalo schools. We would not have been successful in receiving these needed funds without the support of local leaders like Congressman Higgins, Senator Kennedy and Assemblyman Ryan. Senator Kennedy’s guidance and work to bring everyone together to make a collective push for this funding was critical to our plans to expand Project SOAR.”

Project SOAR (Success. Opportunity. Achievement. Responsibility.) is already serving 220 students within three Buffalo public schools – Lovejoy Discovery School 43, Southside Elementary School and Lorraine Academy. This new funding will protect those programs and expand Project SOAR to serve more than 60 additional students at International Preparatory School – with the potential to expand the program to another school and serve 100 more students. With this funding now secured, Project SOAR will serve up to 380 Buffalo students, once all programs are fully implemented.

Project SOAR is a multifaceted program that aims to prepare children for success in life. They provide in-school, year-round programming for at-risk children in Buffalo Public Schools. Project SOAR seeks to increase student attendance, grades and overall performance. The program takes a long-term approach to improving student achievement – providing students with a 10-year commitment that starts in third grade and continues until they graduate. In other words, Project SOAR works with participating students every step of the way from third grade until they successfully graduate high school.

Project SOAR provides students with academic supports that complement their teachers' classroom lessons to maximize their mastery of subject areas as they are learning them. This model allows students to remain engaged in the classroom, while minimizing any delays in the learning process. Moreover, additional assistance is coordinated for children who require more attention and assistance in order to prevent academic delays.

In addition to in-school activities, students spend four weekends each year at Cradle Beach where they spend time outdoors participating in team-building activities and various projects to improve their problem-solving, creative-thinking and conflict-resolution skills. During summers, students participate in a summer program that includes a 10-day camping program and weekly field trips. This helps prevent the “summer slide” – which can have a devastating impact on the academic gains children make during the school year.

Project SOAR is succeeding at the schools where it has already been implemented. Each year, Project SOAR students spend about two more weeks – specifically, 12.6 more days – in the classroom than the average numbers for Buffalo Public Schools' students. Project SOAR participants also have achieved higher grades during all four quarters of the year, as well as higher grades in math, science, ELA and social studies.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate's 63rd District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, the city of Lackawanna and nearly all of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.*