



SOAR Virginia[®]

An early commitment scholarship program





Agenda

- What is SOAR Virginia?
- Eligibility and Student Selection
- Measuring Success
- Frequently Asked Questions



An early commitment scholarship program



- Created to inspire and assist low and moderate income high school students in reaching their higher education goals
- Students pledge to meet program requirements such as regular attendance and community service
- In return, students receive a range of assistance and accumulate scholarship support up to \$2,000 to apply toward certain higher education expenses
- Offered in partnership with local Virginia college access providers



Program Goals



- Inspire students
 - To complete high school and earn diplomas
 - To pursue higher education – 2 year, 4 year or technical
 - To complete higher education and earn Associates, Bachelors or technical degrees
- Improving outcomes for low/moderate income students in Virginia
 - Increase high school graduation rates
 - Increase college enrollment and completion rates
- Provide a meaningful commitment
- Expand the program...ultimately statewide



How SOAR Virginia Works

- Students join SOAR Virginia in the 10th grade and work with a college access advisor during 10th, 11th and 12th grades¹
- For each year students meet the pledge requirements, they receive a scholarship award of \$500
- Students that attend a Virginia higher education institution receive an additional award of \$500
- Upon request by the student, funds are distributed directly to the higher education institution to pay for tuition and fees

¹ Highland High School students may begin in the 9th grade. Award amounts for 9th and 10th grades are \$250 for students beginning in 9th grade.



SOAR Virginia Pledge

I pledge that ...



I will maintain a minimum cumulative GPA* of 2.5



I will meet with my early commitment advisor regularly



I will complete financial literacy training during high school



I will comply with my school's Code of Student Conduct



I will attend school regularly without unexcused absences



I will participate in community service activities



I will complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during my senior year



I will apply to an eligible educational institution, including a 2- or 4-year college or university or technical school

* Or comparable academic achievement as determined by SOAR Virginia



A school counselor's perspective on SOAR Virginia

“Students are committed and excited about planning for their future. This type of excitement contributes to keeping students engaged in school and empowers them to not only plan for their future but to plan to make a positive contribution to society.”



Who Can Join the Program?

To enroll in SOAR Virginia, students must

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal U.S. resident
- Be a Virginia resident
- Be in grades 10-12 in a participating Virginia high school¹
- Agree to comply with the SOAR Virginia pledge
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 at the time of enrollment
- Qualify to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

¹ Highland High School students may begin in the 9th grade.



How Do I Apply?

- If you are interested and you meet the eligibility requirements, see your early commitment advisor for information.
- The deadline to apply is November 15th of your 10th grade year!



How are students selected?



- Early commitment advisors work with school guidance offices to identify and enroll participants
- First step is to pull a list of all rising 10th graders who were eligible for NSLP in their 9th grade year
- Early commitment advisors randomly select a group of students to talk with about SOAR Virginia
- Select up to 15 students per cohort (year) to participate
- Beyond the first year in a school, Virginia529SM provides posters to hang to elicit interest in the program
- Eventually, students will self identify and be randomly selected to participate



An early commitment advisor's perspective

“The fact that the program spans several years creates a sense of commitment and optimism on the part of the students and their parents.”



Measuring Success



- High school performance and graduation rates
- College applications and acceptances
- College enrollment rates
- Rate of on-time FAFSA completion
- The amount of financial aid awarded
- Program participation, retention and completion rates



An director of secondary education's perspective

“We’ve seen a rise in GPA and more kids seeing college in their future, and not just the SOAR Virginia kids. It’s having an infectious effect. Their peers are now seeing college as an option and following up with it. We’re very pleased.”



Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a cost to the school?

- No, there is no cost for a school to participate, other than the time involved by the school administration, counseling or guidance department and other staff.

How are schools selected?

- The college access providers recommend the schools based on their past experiences and understanding of where the SOAR Virginia program could provide the most benefit.

What is required of the school to participate?

- Assistance in selecting students
- Encouraging students to fulfill pledge requirements
- College access providers will coordinate with the school's guidance or counseling department

What is the potential benefit to our school / school system?

- Each school will enroll approximately 45 students during the pilot program
- Each student can receive up to \$2,000
- Potential total benefit to all students in a school is \$90,000



Frequently Asked Questions continued

Will students receive cash?

- No, a Virginia529 inVESTSM (inVESTSM) account is established on their behalf.
- Awards are invested in the Piedmont Portfolio of fixed-income securities
- Distributions are made directly to an eligible higher education institution

What is required for a SOAR Virginia scholar to receive an award?

- An early commitment advisor must certify he/she has substantially fulfilled all pledge requirements
- A student may not meet all pledge requirements during one school year but is still eligible for an award during the next year and is still a SOAR Virginia scholar.

In what circumstances will a SOAR Virginia scholar be expelled from the program?

- If he/she is permanently expelled from school
- If he/she is temporarily expelled, the early commitment advisor will attempt to learn what happened, and make a recommendation to the SOAR Virginia program whether he/she can continue once reinstated.



A school administrator's perspective

“It’s giving them the motivation to look at careers that they might not have considered before because they couldn’t afford to go to college.”



Additional Information

- Investment Management of Funds
- Informational Materials
- SOAR Virginia Application
- Advisor Tools



Investment Management of SOAR Virginia Funds

- Funds will remain in Virginia529 ownership and control until paid out to an eligible higher education institution
- Funds are invested in the Virginia529 inVEST program in the Piedmont Portfolio comprised 100% of Fixed Income / Stable Value securities



Informational Materials

Frequently Asked Questions



SOAR Virginia® Frequently Asked Questions
For Students and Parents/Guardians



What is the SOAR Virginia program?
SOAR Virginia is an early commitment scholarship program created to inspire and assist high school students to reach their postsecondary education goals. It is sponsored by the Virginia College Savings Plan (Virginia529) and brought to you by participating college access providers.

Why should I join SOAR Virginia?
SOAR Virginia participants will receive advising on academic preparation for postsecondary education, assistance completing college applications, obtaining financial aid, including help completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarship support of up to \$2,000 to apply toward postsecondary education and other valuable benefits, including recognition as a SOAR Virginia scholar.

What is the pledge?
I pledge that...

- I will maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 or comparable academic achievement as determined by SOAR Virginia.
- I will meet with my early commitment advisor regularly.
- I will complete financial literacy training during high school.
- I will behave in a manner consistent with my school's Code of Student Conduct.
- I will attend school regularly without unexcused absences.
- I will participate in community service activities.
- I will complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during my senior year.
- I will apply to an eligible educational institution, including a 2- or 4-year college or university or technical school.

Who can join the program?
To enroll, a student must be a U.S. citizen or legal U.S. resident, Virginia resident, in grades 10-12 in a participating Virginia high school, agree to comply with the SOAR Virginia pledge, including the minimum GPA at the time of enrollment, and qualify to participate in the National School Lunch Program. For the school year July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013, a household gross of four qualifies for reduced price or free meals with an annual adjusted gross income of \$42,645 or less. SOAR Virginia will rely on school personnel to identify students who currently qualify for this benefit. For more on the income threshold, please see the 529E immediately below.

SOAR FAQ Student and Parents 1 v.7/12

Cobranded Student Handout

The SOAR Virginia Pledge

I pledge that...

- I will maintain a minimum cumulative GPA* of 2.5
- I will meet with my early commitment advisor regularly
- I will complete financial literacy training during high school
- I will behave in a manner consistent with my school's Code of Student Conduct
- I will attend school regularly without unexcused absences
- I will participate in community service activities
- I will complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during my senior year
- I will apply to an eligible educational institution, including a 2- or 4-year college or university or technical school

* or comparable academic achievement as determined by SOAR Virginia

As a SOAR Virginia scholar, I can expect:

- Advising on academic preparation for post-secondary education
- Financial literacy training
- Assistance completing college applications
- Assistance obtaining financial aid, including help completing the FAFSA
- Scholarship support of up to \$2,000 to apply toward post-secondary education
- Support from an Early Commitment Advisor and the SOAR Virginia community
- Recognition as a SOAR Virginia scholar



2011 – 2012 School Year

New School

New District

New Advisor

email address

New School

New District

New Advisor

email address




(Please sign in water fountain)

Virginia 529 Plan and offered in

tax-advantaged savings

ation Program (VSP),

tion accounts as of June

age savings options, visit

community colleges located

than 400,000 students each

post Career Connect can

define their career aspirations

and workforce training.

<http://www.vccs.edu/>

Address

address



SOAR Virginia Application

Ready. Set.
SOAR.



Sponsored by the Virginia 529 College Savings Plan and offered in partnership with participating college access providers.



SOAR Virginia™ Enrollment Form

Student information will only be used for purposes related to SOAR Virginia.

- To enroll in SOAR Virginia, students must meet eligibility requirements including:
1. Be a student in grades 10-12, enrolled in a participating Virginia high school*
 2. Comply with the SOAR Virginia pledge, including the minimum GPA at the time of enrollment.
 3. Qualify to participate in the National School Lunch Program.

Please print clearly and complete all applicable sections.

Student Last Name		Student First Name		Student Middle Name	
Street Address			City	State VA	Zip
Telephone Number <input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Cell		Secondary Telephone Number (optional)		<input type="checkbox"/> Home <input type="checkbox"/> Cell	
Email Address				Social Security Number	
Date of Birth <small>MM/DD/YYYY</small>	Gender (check one) <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female		Graduation Year <small>20</small>		
Name of Current School			School District		
Name of Previous School			School District		
How did you first hear about SOAR Virginia? <input type="checkbox"/> School <input type="checkbox"/> College Access Provider <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Friend / Classmate <input type="checkbox"/> Website <input type="checkbox"/> Media <input type="checkbox"/> Other					

* Highland High School students may begin in the 9th grade.

Pledge

Parent/Guardian Consent

Parents and Guardians: Your support of your student in SOAR Virginia is an essential element to their success. Please join him or her in committing to the SOAR Virginia pledge.

- I grant permission for my student to be a SOAR Virginia scholar.
- I have read all the materials about the SOAR Virginia program found on the SOAR Virginia website at Virginia529.com/SOAR, including the Privacy Policy.
- I grant SOAR Virginia advisors permission to view my student's academic record and receive information from school teachers, administrators and counselors about my student to ensure eligibility and fulfillment of the SOAR Virginia pledge and to share such information with the Virginia College Savings Plan as is necessary to administer SOAR Virginia.
- I understand that enrollment in SOAR Virginia does not guarantee my student admission to or free tuition at any post-secondary institution.
- I understand that my student's admission and continued participation in SOAR Virginia depends upon his/her compliance at all times with the requirements of the SOAR Virginia Pledge.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
 Parent/Guardian Printed Name: _____
 Student Name: _____
 Relationship to Student: _____
 Parent/Guardian Email: _____
 Parent/Guardian Phone Number: _____
 Date: _____

Media Clearance (Optional)
 By signing below, I grant SOAR Virginia and Virginia College Savings Plan permission to publish my student's name and/or image to be used in press releases, news articles, promotional materials, and/or the SOAR Virginia/Virginia529 website.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

As a SOAR Virginia scholar, I can expect:

- Adding on academic preparation for post-secondary education
- Financial literacy training
- Assistance completing college applications
- Assistance obtaining financial aid, including help completing the FAFSA
- Scholarship support of up to \$2,000 to apply toward post-secondary education
- Support from an Early Commitment Advisor and the SOAR Virginia community
- Recognition as a SOAR Virginia scholar

Student Signature: _____
 Student Printed Name: _____
 School: _____
 Date: _____





Advisor Tools

Community Service Hours Log



SOAR Virginia® Community Service Hours Log



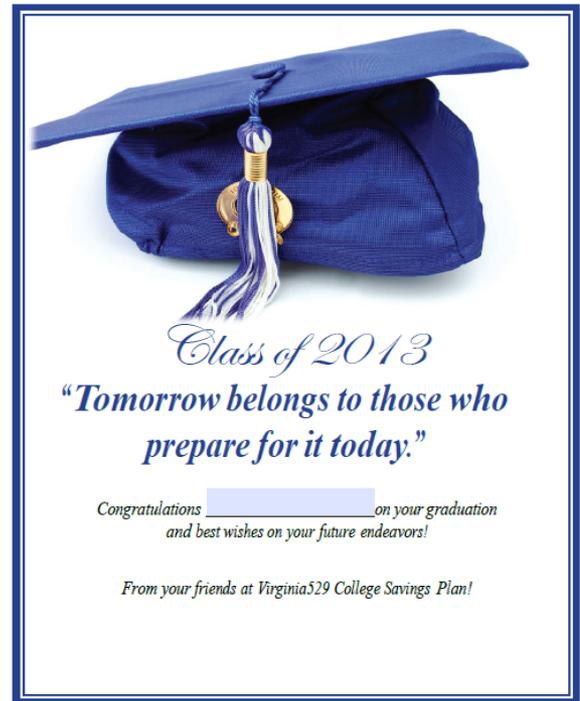
YOUR NAME _____
SCHOOL & GRADE _____
GRASP ADVISOR'S NAME _____

Date	Site Name	Supervisor's Name	Activity and Description of Duties	Total Hours	Supervisor's Signature

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date fall review: _____ Date spring review: _____ Total Hours: _____ Approved: _____

Congratulations Graduate Template





Questions?

Visit: www.virginia529.com/SOAR

Email: Beth Miller- bmiller@virginia529.com or
Kim Miller- kmiller@virginia529.com

The material in this presentation has been prepared by Virginia529 and is general background information about SOAR Virginia activities current as of the date of this presentation. This information is given in summary form and does not purport to be complete.